CHEERIO!

HAROLD M. HAYS
MAJOR, M.C. U.S.A.

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Major Harold M. Hays, M.C., U.S. Army

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by

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Major, M. C. U. S. A.

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DEDICATED

TO

LIEUTENANT HAROLD SYDNEY MORGAN, M.R.C., U.S.A.

WHO WAS "KILLED IN ACTION," APRIL 12th, 1918

AND TO

THE OFFICERS OF THE FIELD AMBULANCE
AND THE BATTALION

WITH WHOM I SERVED AT THE FRONT

FROM NOVEMBER 23rd, 1917

TO

FEBRUARY 28th, 1918

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF THEIR MANY

KINDNESSES TO ME

ARMY ABBREVIATIONS

C. O. .....Commanding Officer.
M. P. .....Military Police.
R. T. O. .....Railway Transportation Officer.
A. D. M. S. ....Assistant Director of Medical Services.
A. D. S. .....Advanced Dressing Station.
R. A. M. C. ..Royal Army Medical Corps.
C. C. S. .....Casualty Clearing Station.
Acc. W'd. ....Accidental Wound.
G. S. W'd. ....Gunshot Wound.
M. O. .....Medical Officer.
A. E. F. .....American Expeditionary Force.
B. E. F. .....British Expeditionary Force.
N. C. O. .....Non-commissioned Officer.
G. S. Wagon ..General Supply Wagon.
D. S. C. .....Divisional Supply Column.
Coy. .....Company.
S. B. .....Stretcher-bearer.
I. C. T. .....Inflammation of the Connective Tissue.
M. D. .....Medicine and Duty.
R. A. P. .....Regimental Aid Post.
Hq. .....Headquarters.
R. C. .....Roman Catholic.
D. A. D. O. S. ..Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Stores.
R. E. .....Royal Engineers.

INTRODUCTION

No other war in history has produced, before its finish, such a flood of articles, books, pamphlets and commentary of every nature as has this one. On the other hand, no other war has approached this one in size, and the proportion is doubtless fair. How valuable this mass of material will prove when time has sifted it is an open question. It will perhaps be somewhat difficult to separate the sincere from the calculated, to know just what is propaganda and what is not. The necessity for a rigid censorship has in a certain sense cast the odour of propaganda about the most innocent work, for it is plain enough that the censor cannot let pass that which will seem in effect dangerous to the practical issue, even though he knows the statements made, whatever they may be, to be truth. The motto of the moment is, and must be, expediency, and history must wait, and possibly in the waiting suffer.

But within the not very well defined limits thus

laid down "for information and future guidance," as the army phrase-book has it, much interesting and some valuable work has been, and is being, done. Also some pernicious documents have found their way into print, some decrying war and others glorifying it. It is difficult to know which is the more evil of the two. In the larger number of instances, however, the view taken has been impersonal, albeit a not dispassionate one. It is this type of work that men will turn to in the future. It seems to me that Major Hays has so written of his experiences with the British Expeditionary Force that his book comes well within this last category. It is not pretentious, it is frankly impressionistic but within its scope it is sincere. I hesitate somewhat to use the word "sincere" so often, for it has been the battle cry of the *poseur* until it has fallen a little into contempt or under suspicion but there is so much today that *is* insincere, so much that is deliberately false in burthen, that it seems wiser to be direct than to search for literary synonyms. There are two other more specific reasons why this particular book is worthy of attention.

INTRODUCTION

The Medical Officers of the Reserve Corps who came to France in the spring, summer, and fall of 1917 from America were placed in a peculiar position. In nine cases out of ten they were not soldiers, either by temperament or by training. Of a sudden they found themselves called upon to take an active part in a war of great magnitude, and to maintain a position beside men who had proved themselves during four years of active service to be not only surgeons and doctors but soldiers as well, and good ones. The Americans were frankly green, and they usually had the good sense to admit it, but the situation called for more than a little tact on both sides. There were national and temperamental differences to be met and coped with, and there were individual problems without number to be adjusted, but one thing there was always, a strong racial bond that provided at once a buffer, and a plane of understanding. Not all of the men called upon met the test, but of those who did meet and master it America and Britain have every reason to be proud. The American Medical Officers, and the nurses and men they brought with them were the vanguard of the

American Expeditionary Force. Before the troops of the line had their sailing orders the Medical Corps was active in the field and behind the lines. And as they are deprived in some measure from sharing in the full glory of their comrades in the fighting units let such credit as they have earned be theirs in all its fulness.

Major Hays has not laid particular stress on either the dark or the light side of war. He has taken events and conditions as he found them, and in the sum total the fine has more than balanced the bitter. No doubt this is in some part due to the point of view he himself has brought to bear, and, if this be so, it seems to me that that point of view is essentially the normal one. I have served under Major Hays and, like the servant girl in the old story, I am ready to give him a recommendation. He can lead men—partly because of inherent ability, and partly because of the lessons taught him by his British brethren in the days of his apprenticeship. It is interesting, and typical of the war game, to note what has happened to the three M. O.'s who started out together to go up the line. Major Hays is in charge of a great camp hos-

pital in the south of France, far from the sound of guns. Lieutenant Cook is back at the Base Hospital he started from, still with the inevitable cigar sticking cockily out of his mouth. Lieutenant Morgan, "Syd," is dead, killed in action. Only one out of three in a year of war is not a bad average, but unfortunately the two who are left cannot make up for the one who goes. Lieutenant Morgan was our first casualty.

If this war is to achieve the high aims and endeavours ascribed to it by those who feel the need for justification, that achievement will take place only through the rewelding of the two great English speaking nations into one. We all know that now; it is trite to mention it. But that welding is not and cannot be an abstract thing. It must be personal if it is to be effective. For this reason if for no other it has been highly significant and vitally important that the Briton and the American should serve side by side in the same trench, in the same dugout, in the same hospital. I do not know the personal reactions of the Tommies and of their officers towards our Yanks, but I do know well our reactions towards them, and I thank

heaven that we were given the opportunity, even under such terrible circumstances, of appreciating and valuing them truly. Perhaps it takes a cataclysm to perform a miracle. As a record of one such personal experience I believe Major Hays' book to be of distinct value. And those who come to it in after times will find its importance less in its account of war, other and better books have been written on that theme, than in its story of the beginning of the great reunion of two nations.

Pte. 1/c EDWARD HALE BIERSTADT,
M. D. N. A. A. E. F.
U. S. Base Hospital No. 2.
No. 1 (Presbyterian U. S. A.)
General Hospital
B. E. F.

CHEERIO![1]

CHAPTER I

THE much reverenced, dignified commanding officer of our Unit sent for Lieutenants Cook and Morgan and myself one morning of a bleak November day. The rain had turned to hail before dawn, and the narrow streets of our village, nestling in the hills and opening on the Channel to the north, roared and shrieked as the wind came sharply round the corners.

The three of us reached the C. O.'s office about the same time, our hats awry from the wind, our raincoats clinging damply to us. Morgan, big, ruddy, cheery with his everlasting smile; Cookie, with his usual cheap American cigar drooping perilously from a corner of his mouth; and I, round-goggled and serious.

[1] Cheerio, sometimes spelled Cheero, means more than our "Good-bye." It signifies good luck and God bless you.

The C. O. greeted us with a busy nod, and took up a paper from his overladen desk.

"Orders from the front," he said solemnly. "You three men are detailed to join the 36th Division. Probably will be assigned to an ambulance. Better pack your things and be ready to start about four A. M."

It was not a surprise, for the three of us had been sent to a gas school some days before. Being gassed is the first signal that you will be moving frontward.

I wish I had time to tell you about the gas school: how the sergeant instructor fits you up, pulls you into a chamber with your face-gear on, and lets off steam—gassy steam—enough to kill you ten times over. But this is another story that will have to wait until the war is over.

It wasn't necessary for me to be awakened the next morning. I hadn't been asleep—just lay there all night long, wondering whether I should come back alive, wondering where a machine-gun bullet was going to hit me, wondering how my family would feel if I had the misfortune to be buried in six feet of France's rich, fertile soil.

I kept on making myself miserable until the zero hour of four A. M.

Was I afraid? Oh, no. I was just a little bit creepy around my backbone, and my feet were awfully cold.

The morning hadn't got out of bed yet—only Morgan, Cookie, and I, who, after hastily swallowing a cup of black coffee (without sugar) and some dark French bread (without butter or margarine) climbed into the waiting ambulance with a maximum of useless luggage. It was some merry party. The stars hid behind the clouds, the rain poured down viciously, the wind howled a dismal good-bye.

We arrived at the railroad terminal about seven A. M. There was the usual bustle of a war-time crowd. Soldiers, soldiers everywhere, marching in from all directions from the rest and convalescent camps, now well and ready once more to travel to the battle area. Some were lined up in company formation, others were grouped about the ten-gallon, steaming, soup kettles, dipping in their mess tins and bringing out the boiling hot tea.

We were "on our own," and it was up to us to find the 36th Division that day, the next or any time before the war ended.

An M. P. watched us curiously, and then came toward me.

"When does this train start?" I asked.

"Well," he answered slowly, "it is scheduled to start at nine o'clock, but no one can ever tell. Depends on how soon the troops get aboard. Shouldn't wonder if she started some time this morning."

That was consoling. Already we were dog-tired. Morgan went to get the rations—cheese, hard-tack, bully-beef, apple and plum jam and "iron rations." He brought enough for a week, but he forgot a can-opener. Cookie went to look for a baggage car (we call it luggage over here), while I inspected every one of the fifty odd cars to see if I could find one suitable for three first-class Americans.

Troops trains have a great way of moving. Forty men are packed into a "forty Hommes" cattle car which ordinarily is closed on "eight

chevaux." As soon as the men are packed in tight enough to keep warm, the officers jump into a side-door arrangement that has eight seats. We are all ready to start, and the boys say "hooray." But the conductor has forgotten his whistle or something. After a few minutes or a few hours a miniature steam whistle on the engine "toot-toots" in a high falsetto key, the dwarfed cars try to rend themselves asunder, the wheels go round one circumference, the brakes jam on suddenly—and there you are. The trainmaster jumps off and runs along from car to car, trying to find out who put the pebble on the track.

By mid-morning the grimy, ugly station faded away, and we began our momentous journey to the Front, to the 36th Division, somewhere in France, but no one knew where. We were assured that we had been put on the right train, however.

Cookie sings "In the Good Old Summer Time" in Chinese. Morgan stares out of the window. I try to get acquainted with the other officers in our compartment. They are talking in low tones

about their experiences at the Front. They have been home on leave, been over to merry old England.

I plunged into the confab.

"Do any of you gentlemen know where the 36th Division is?" I asked.

"When I was out here three weeks ago they were somewhere near Bapaume," said one, mentioning a well-known town at the Front. "Better enquire from an R. T. O. along the line farther. Ever been out before?"

"Nope—been at the base. We're going out to see some of the fun."

They all smiled.

"You'll get all the fun you want before you're through. When's the war going to end?"

Here let me state that every one asks that same question when they meet a stranger. All strangers are prophets—maybe.

"When we lick the Germans, and no sooner," I answered tartly.

After that we became well acquainted, and they talked loud enough for us to hear. One of them was a young cavalry officer, now in infantry.

"This is one grand old war. If anybody says it isn't, have them ask me," he said. "All I want is a nice little Blighty that will send me back to England for ever. I've got a friend who is the lucky dog for you. When the last push was on he and I were sitting in a little dugout in the front line. The Huns were having a merry party—shrapnel, bullets, gas and all that. We were talking of Blighties, and wishing we could get one. One of my orderlies came for me. I hadn't gotten more than fifty feet away when a 5.9 came along, and a few bullets whizzed by the dugout door. I heard some one yelling to me. I turned round, and there was my friend laughing his jolly head off, holding up his right arm from which the blood was streaming. 'Got a Blighty, Sam; got a Blighty!' and the next day he started back. Lucky dog."

The hairs on my neck began to rise again.

For the rest of the day, we smoked a dozen packs of cigarettes, two cans of tobacco, and Cookie smoked many "tooth-picks."[1] We varied the monotony by playing bridge on our food box.

[1] Long, thin cigars.

Some one suggested grub, so we hungrily dove into the cheese, and cursed Morgan for not providing a can-opener. What's the use of bully-beef when it is wrapped up in good American solder?

Darkness comes on early in these climes, and by five o'clock we were hugging ourselves to keep warm. At 5.30 we stopped in a No-Man's Land—flat, empty earth on either side. At seven o'clock we crawled into a station much alive with the chatter of French, Portuguese and English troops. The blue, faded uniforms of the French poilu contrasted with the dull khaki of the English.

Somehow we dumped our luggage out on to the platform, found another train, and settled ourselves, baggage and all, on the hard seats of a third-class carriage. Some one was singing "There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight." Strange how paradoxical some men are.

We rode and rode and rode. I think we bumped along at, at least, twelve miles an hour. Mirth had ceased. We and the night were glum. We were silent, but the heavens poured on. The distance between stations was minutes apart; the stops at the stations lasted an hour or so. At every

stop I would enquire for the whereabouts of the 36th Division.

At midnight we were at a railroad siding, where we were ordered to change cars. Men, officers, baggage were again dumped out on to the almost submerged tracks. The downpour and mist were so heavy that I could just see the glare of the engine light some distance away. Flashes of thin lightning streaked the sky in the distance—the flash of our guns.

Thus far I had travelled in war-time luxury. But now I encountered that dignified being who wears a red band on his hat, and is called an R. T. O. He usually sits in a nice warm hut while you freeze outside. He tells you where you are to go, if he knows where you are to go.

Again for the hundreth time that day I asked meekly, "Can you tell me where the 36th Division is?"

"Somewhere up the line," he obligingly answered, and pointed to the train, the headlight of whose engine I had seen.

After much trouble, and with the help of a few Tommies standing round, Cookie, Morgan and I

were deposited with our well-soaked bedding rolls into a nice, comfortable cattle car. Onward we rode, by jumps and starts—onward, onward, onward. At every station men got off, but our division was onward. Once I fell asleep and dreamed I was getting into the Grand Central Station. But I was rudely awakened by a shout, "The 36th Division here. All out for the 36th Division."

Morgan, Cookie and I began to roll our baggage toward the sliding door. A miserable sound assailed our ears—the train was moving on.

A few miles farther on we came to a halt once more. We had missed our division, we knew, but we dumped ourselves out before the train could make up its mind to move again.

I made enquiries at a signal station, where I was informed that we might get back sometime in the morning, by seven o'clock perhaps. That was encouraging, considering that we had been up twenty-four hours, were soaked to the skin, and hadn't had anything to eat but cheese and biscuit.

"Some merry war," I said to Cook, who was still chewing viciously on a wet, ragged cigar. "Can you hear the guns?"

"Don't care a damn about guns. Give me a floor to sit on, a nice soft little floor, where I can sit and roll my head to sleep, and I won't care if the war never ends."

I saw a small light shining through a half-open door of a hut a short distance away. It looked inviting, and so I approached the owner, another R. T. O.—but this time a non-commissioned officer who, apparently, didn't like my looks.

I explained the situation.

"Sorry, can't let you in. Have a lot of work to do, and you will disturb me."

Now, wouldn't that get you? Weary officers; heroes who felt they hadn't had any sleep for twenty years, were refused a measly wooden floor. I almost lost my temper.

"Say, look here!" I yelled, "you dirty scoundrel. If I had you in the American Army, first I'd smash your face, and then I'd have you court-martialed. Who do you think you are, you —— blankety, blank fool? Keep your old floor."

Fortunately there was a British officer with us, who, when he heard my story, tore his hair. Although he had never been up to the Front, he was

one brave man, and flattened that miserable specimen with two stripes on his sleeves until he crawled in the mud apologizing—and then he let us use his floor. Nice of him, wasn't it?

My last impression was of four weary-worn individuals sprawled out on the floor of a little shanty. Morgan was propped against the wall, with a bench for a pillow. Cookie was snoring ponderously with open mouth, and a stub of a cigar in his left hand, by which he supported himself. The English officer, I don't recollect very clearly. I remember trying to feel comfortable with my back up against the door and my feet straight out in front of me. My head dropped toward my left shoulder—and I slept until morning.

CHAPTER II

I WAS suddenly awakened by a cold draught. Our host had opened the door. The dreary, cold day was beginning to break.

I arose awkwardly from the floor. I felt sore all over. My left foot had gone to sleep. Without any preliminaries, I aroused my companions. They drowsily opened their eyes.

"Gee," said Cook, as he rubbed his eyes, "Thought I was in the Waldorf-Astoria. Where's that stump I was smoking last night?"

Morgan woke with a grin, as usual; while the British officer cursed the powers that be who had ordered him from a comfortable berth.

We went over to consult the signallers. It was now light enough to see the country around us, through the rising mist. A few huts—low, flat, irregular structures—stretched along the railroad tracks. Duck-boards, deeply submerged in mud,

and so slippery that it was almost a gymnastic feat to walk on them, ran from one end of the hut out to the other toward the signaller's shack—an enclosed sentry-box, large enough for a telephone, two men and a stove. As far as the eye could see was mud, mud, mud—no sign of vegetation, not a single tree. The surrounding field presented a freckly surface—hundreds and thousands of shell-holes, outlines of trenches, once deep and well built, in wavy lines; showing that but recently this ground had been occupied, whether by enemy troops or our own, I didn't know. In the awakening dawn could be seen flash on flash of yellow-white flames, followed by far-off detonations. It was war!

I enquired of our train from the signaller.

"It will be along about seven o'clock," he said. "Not much of a train—a flat car—but you haven't far to go."

Ever ride on one of these animals? Remember it was cold and raining hard. Four officers, new to the front, were allowed to climb on to a platform somewhere behind the engine. Our baggage was deposited on the coal in the tender, which didn't improve its appearance. The engine, tender

and one lonely flat car started slowly, but quickly gained in momentum until two legs weren't enough to stand on. The cold brought the thermometer down to forty below zero, the wind pierced through my backbone to the skin on my abdomen, the rain pelted down like hail-stones, and reddened the back of my neck. The four of us linked ourselves closely together, arm in arm, leg against leg, so that we should have eight supports instead of two. We had only five miles of it, but it seemed like twenty! We never went more than fifteen miles an hour, but it seemed like a hundred. Never did aeroplane seem to go faster.

The train stopped; we untwined ourselves and laboriously and awkwardly descended. Our mud-soaked and soggy baggage was thrown on to the adjacent track. Poor baggage!

We immediately began our enquiries for the 36th Division, and the A. D. M. S., to whom we were to report. We met many who did not know, but were finally directed to the orderly officer in the near-by camp. Here we found a real soldier—a portly gentleman of fifty, who looked as though he had just come out of a bandbox. His hair was

neatly parted, his face and hands were clean, his clothes were spotless. His leggings, belt and boots were highly polished. Moreover, he had a clean, healthy smile of welcome.

"Hungry?" he asked.

"Not so you could notice it," I said to myself. But my stomach was so empty my belt wouldn't hold my trousers up.

Cook groaned.

"Alright," he went on. "Go over to the mess, and after you've had a cup of coffee, some bacon and a slice of bread, I'll talk to you."

It sounded good to me. We made a bee-line for the place he indicated, and sat down to a slimy mess called food. Our appetites were equal to the occasion.

Our new friend, the orderly officer, took pains to explain to us on the map just where we were, and directed us to the A. D. M. S. in a near-by village. He offered to look after our baggage until we located ourselves.

"This village is only a few kilometres away," he said with a smile. "It's a nice muddy morning, good for walking. So take the first road to the

right, and follow the sign-posts. Any one there will direct you to the A. D. M. S. Cheeri-O!"

Morgan, Cook and I slid out on the duck-boards to the road, which was jammed with passing lorries, ammunition wagons, limbers, ambulances. The din was terrific. The rumble of the heavy wheels on the square-stoned pavemented roads, which have stood the supreme test of time since the days when Napoleon's army passed over them, mingled with the crashing sounds of shells in the skies above. After walking about two kilometres, we hailed a passing three-ton truck, and jumping in over the high tail-board, were driven to our destination.

It may seem a simple thing to find an A. D. M. S., who is a big bug in the division, but it isn't always. Big bugs have a way of hiding themselves in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, particularly when they are near the front line. They don't want to seem conspicuous when the enemy is loosening up. We had some problem to find our man. We wound in and out of country roads, now crowded with troops, passing through the streets of what was once a village. Here and there stood a straight wall

of brick, irregularly clipped off at the top; a thatch of straw between rafters told of a barn that was no more. Piles of debris—wood and dirt and stone and brick—were all that was left of former habitations. A dilapidated church steeple swayed precariously in the air. Most of the foundation had disappeared, and irregular, jagged holes in its slate covering showed that it had stood in the path of the enemy.

We found the A. D. M. S.'s office after considerable difficulty. He was hidden away at the rear of a jumbled court-yard, in a one-story affair, consisting of two rooms, of what had once been a house, the walls of which remained. The roof was made of corrugated iron, covered with sandbags. Along one side, up against the brick wall of the court-yard, were two or three wooden huts, which I found out later were the officers' sleeping quarters and mess.

The A. D. M. S.—a colonel of the old school, grey-haired, grey-moustached and very soldierly—shook our hands in good old American style. After taking our particulars, he assigned Cook to one ambulance, Morgan and myself to another. Cook

was a little crestfallen. It was quite some time before I saw him again.

The A. D. M. S., in his kindly way, explained the war maps to us in detail, so that we could locate ourselves.

"It is very important," he said, "for every officer to know just where he is. Later on you will be supplied with trench maps. But for the present I'll have to point things out to you. Mr. Cook is to go to the 108th Field Ambulance at a slag heap on the side of the canal. Mr. Morgan will go to an advanced dressing station about two kilometres behind the line. I think you'll like it there, Mr. Morgan. Captain Hays will go to Windy Corner, another A. D. S., where we attend to the walking wounded. So far our casualties have been very slight—but there's no telling. Got your tin hats? No? Well, you'll get them up the line, and if you're fortunate you won't be nipped before you get there."

You must remember that none of us had been at war before. We weren't soldiers—only ordinary doctors who had nerve enough for civilian practice but had yet to be shown whether they could stand the

gaff. Within one hour we were to be shown war as it really was; real grim war, with all its humour and all its horrors; for we were in the midst of a big push—something that occurs only once in so often. I must confess I wasn't at all frightened, only intensely excited, but I couldn't keep the little hairs on my back in place, and my hands were rather clammy.

We were dumped into a Ford ambulance. Before I got in I stopped to say "hello" to the radiator. I patted its warm nose! It's the American's real friend out there.

The shriek of the shells overhead; the flashing tongues of flame from a thousand cannon; the awful din of the passing wagons; the constant whir of the aeroplanes in the leaden sky; the tramp, tramp of tens of thousands of feet; the clatter of the cavalry horses; the whiz of the motorcycles; the rumble of ammunition wagons, lent a picturesqueness to the scene that is indescribable.

We passed a large wire enclosure just off the roadside, in which hundreds of men in grey-green overcoats and sharp round hats were standing; many of them, with their gaunt faces pressed close

against the imprisoning wire, looked like a lot of curious pigs snouting for food.

"German prisoners," the driver said, as he pointed to them. "Got them in yesterday, and haven't had time to move them back farther. I ain't wishin' them any hard luck, but I'd like to see one of their own shells land in there. Would scare them up a bit! Sad looking lot, ain't they?"

Farther on we came upon a huge wire netting strung on twenty-foot poles, and irregularly covered with a fantastic pattern of leaves.

"What's that?" I asked.

"German camouflage," he answered. "In the distance you can't make out troops behind it. It's only four days ago that we routed out the Johnnies behind there. 'Tain't much protection against bullets or shrapnel."

We now passed off the main road into a side cut, where we bumped along a shell-torn way. Deserted trenches ran into the near-by fields on both sides, wavy lines of cut earth. A huge crater showed where a large shell had recently found its way. A temporary bridge for traffic wound along one side. We rode over a waterless canal, which

was filled in at one point to make a roadway, and finally stopped in front of my new home to be.

The A. D. S. was a well-constructed dug-out, the receiving room of which was above ground. This was a long, corridor-like arrangement with walls of brick and sand-bags, and a roof of iron, over which irregular piles of dirt had been thrown. Even near at hand it was hard to distinguish it as a habitation, for it merged into a large hill. A half dozen motor ambulances were ranged along the road, and opposite it were three or four well-camouflaged tents, protected from flying shrapnel by surrounding bags of sand. The door of the A. D. S. was made of two hanging blankets, well soaked in chemicals to keep out the vapour from deadly gas shells.

I stepped inside. The place was lighted by two portable, smelly, acetylene lanterns, which made me think of garlic. In the dim light could be seen rows of stretchers in the centre of the room, on some of which lay cheerful, wounded Tommies. On one side of the room was a bench made of boards, supported on cracker boxes and covered with blankets, on which were sitting the walking

wounded. They were sipping tea, or eating chocolate and biscuits. On the opposite side was a stove with kettles of tea, a table filled with medical comforts (mostly eatables), and another table holding the equipment for first aid to the wounded—bandages, gauze, splints, adhesive plaster, iodine, safety pins and aromatic ammonia. Busy R. A. M. C. orderlies were rushing round handing out tea, bandaging up a wound, or filling out a field card, and tying it on to the top button of the patient's coat.

I had heard of the horrors of war. I expected to see suffering. I had pictured the groaning, wounded Tommies. But my first impression was of the general air of cheerfulness on the dirty, mud-stained, almost happy faces, of the mystic light of victory in the men's eyes. Particularly I noted that every wounded man was smoking a cigarette—a sufficient demonstration of the soothing effect of tobacco. Could these be men just returned from battle?—those gentle, half-timid individuals who already had forgotten their morning's lust and now were afraidly polite?

I noticed a tall, heavily black-bearded indi-

vidual near the clerk's desk as I came up to inquire for the C. O.

"What you want?" I heard the clerk say to him.

"Come to bury the wounded," he answered in broken English.

The clerk laughed.

"Come to bury the wounded? Well, you old sour-faced son of Africa, you just beat it over No-Man's Land till you come to the Boche trenches. You can bury all their wounded you want, over there."

The African walked away, shaking his head.

The clerk turned to me politely.

"Queer ones, we get here. That man belongs to a burying company. They don't understand English very well."

"The Colonel is down below, sir, in his dug-out. Be careful of your head on the steps."

I had seen pictures of dug-outs, and had always imagined them to be cold, clammy holes, in the ground, that leaked like poorly built cellars. Some of them are that way, but this one was well constructed. The low ceilinged passage-way brought me down into the bowels of the earth by thirty odd

steps. I emerged into a large wide room, well heated and dry, and lighted by a single candle. It was the servants' quarters and kitchen. On one side opened a hole in the wall, in which bunks were built for the men. A short passage-way, high enough to stand in upright, brought me to the C. O.'s room, where I reported. This room, measuring six by eight feet, was bright and clean. In one corner was a miniature French stove, on the table were books and papers and two candles, and alongside was a large bed made of four uprights of wood, over which canvas was tightly spread.

I was warmly greeted by the C. O., and his second in command. Lunch was soon brought in, and we sat down to a good meal of "camouflaged" bully-beef, American cheese and hot tea.

"Anything you particularly want, Hays?" asked the Colonel.

I explained that I hadn't had any sleep in forty-eight hours, and was dog-tired.

"Well," he resumed, "we won't ask you to do any work for us today. Just pile into my bed after grub. You'll have plenty to do when you wake up."

I unstrapped my bedding roll and got out two blankets. I think I took off my shoes. And so, while our dug-out trembled from the bursting of large calibre shells near by, and little pieces of dirt crumbled down from the walls, I gathered the blankets around me and fell into a dreamless sleep, from which I did not awaken for six hours.

CHAPTER III

IT was perhaps fortunate that we had very few casualties that first night, for it took all my time, and a great deal of moral persuasion, for me to get acquainted with my new home. The second in command, Captain Christie, a Scotchman with a sense of humour, acted as my guide. I was taken through a narrow passage, and down a pathway of some forty feet into a large underground room where the orderlies slept. A dozen of them who had been on day-duty were asleep, rolled up in their blankets on the floor. Then I was shown the various exits of the dug-out.

"The Huns have a bad habit of smashing in our dug-outs," said my guide. "So we make them with a number of exits. If one is smashed in we can get out of another."

We walked up out into the open. I was surprised to find that the air down below had not been foul or stale. The numerous passage-ways gave

ample ventilation. It was still raining, the lightning of the guns flashed and the Verilights of the enemy lit up the sky. The thunder of the guns hammered my ear drums until they ached. The mud ploughed over the tops of my ankle-boots as I followed my guide along the dark road.

"Guess we had better go in and see what's doing," he said. And so, much to my relief, we entered the receiving room again.

It was filled with patients, and so for the next two hours we were silently busy, putting on a dressing here, a splint there.

Again I was impressed with the general air of cheerfulness. No one complained; there was the hope of Blighty in the eyes of most of the men.

"Where are you hit?" I heard one of the men ask another.

"Got pecked in the arm. Hopes it's a Blighty," he answered as he looked at it anxiously.

"Aw, it ain't bleeding enough, Bo," his neighbour answered.

A venerable padre was talking to another man.

"Are you much hurt, my man?" the Padre inquired.

The man pointed to the bandaged arm.

"Are you married?" the padre asked.

"Not as bad as that, sir," was the reply.

Here I saw my first shell-shock cases—brave men, some of whom have seen service for three years, never flinching, never wavering. Then—a shell bursts near them, burying them alive. Their companions are killed or fearfully maimed. They escape unhurt—except their brains—and they come in to us pitiable, nervous wrecks; hands shaking with palsy, knees trembling, head lolling from side to side; and, try as they will, they can't stammer out a word. Many of these cases recover—but there is an indelible black mark on the brain.

I had heard of one sad case. The man had been fighting valiantly in France for nearly three years and one day he was buried by a shell.

They dug him out, well and sound, but he couldn't say a word without stammering. They sent him in to the field ambulance—diagnosis, shell shock. They sent him in to the C. C. S. where they kept him for a week or so—diagnosis, shell shock. He travelled from the C. C. S., to a base hospital and finally got to England, where the venerable

authorities put a question mark after the diagnosis. In due course of time he was sent out to the front again with a new draft. In his first tour of the trenches he funked, and the next morning he was led up to a stone wall, grim and resolute. All fear had left him. And when the crack of the rifles died away, an unheralded hero lay upon the ground. He had done his duty valiantly, until something in his brain had snapped.

Christie and I were relieved at midnight and so sleepily bumped our heads down the stairs again. Our sleeping rooms consisted of the narrow passage-way which connected the main dug-out with the one farther down into the bowels of the earth. Our batmen had opened up our bedding rolls and placed the blankets on "biscuits," a term applied to a stretcher when it is used for sleeping purposes. Nails or pegs were driven into the muddy walls to hang our clothes upon. A sputtering candle, draughtily flickering, cast weird shadows. A hanging blanket separated our quarters.

I hastily removed my shoes. It was too cold and damp to take off anything else. I set the candle beside my bunk, slid in between two folds of blanket,

donned a knitted sleeping helmet, blew up my air pillow and, after looking around for rats, lice and a few other animals, covered myself up cozily and drifted off into dreamland.

For three days I lived in my underground home, three days of thunderous noise, wounded and dying men; three days of cold, wintry rain which penetrated through to my bones; three days of bully-beef, cheese, canned soup and tea; three nights busily employed tending to the wounded and occupying my spare time by standing on a little hillock across the road in the pouring rain, trying to learn the difference between the Boche guns and ours. The scene was dismal, mysterious but awe-inspiring. The heavens were lit up by a thousand flashes—blue, red and white; rockets lingered in the air, broke and sprayed the darkness with starry sunshine; Verilights rose above the trenches, hanging in nothingness for a moment and then as suddenly going out. The wail of the guns was ceaseless. Our howitzers and big 9–4's kept up an incessant, sharp tattoo, to which I had become so accustomed that they made little impression on my consciousness.

All of this sounds very creepy, very frightful. It might have been, but every one was so cheerful, almost happy; there was such a spirit of optimism in the air, the wounded were so brave, especially after you had given them cigarettes; the officers were so obliging and courteous to me and so kind to the men, that no one thought of the horrors of war. Even wounded Tommies can swear as well as usual, and a German prisoner who had been brought in to us with a slight injury, a most happy youngster, was treated with the usual courtesy and more consideration than he deserved.

"We're soft guys," I heard one of the men remark. "I swears if I'd see another Johnnie I'd spike him. I goes up wid my platoon to a pill-box where two Germans is wid der 'ands over their 'eads, saying, 'Komerad,' and when we gets near enough, they lets go wid their machine-guns and kills most of us. That's where I got this Blighty. Then I comes in 'ere and gets so soft and glad to be 'ere that I looks at this little cast-off-two-for-nothing and never even gets mad. Ain't it 'ell?"

Just as we were getting ready to stand another

day of this racket, our orders came in to move, and by ten o'clock in the morning, the officers of the ambulance who were to "take over" arrived. Within an hour, we were on the move to a rest area, wagons trimly packed with ambulance stores, limbers, motor-ambulances and so on, carrying everything from a tin cup to a coal shovel.

The complete outfit of an ambulance moves with it, and to get an idea of the equipment, one must reckon that an ambulance consists of over two hundred officers and men, over forty horses and mules, over fifteen ambulances, wheeled stretchers and motorcycles. When in marching order, with proper intervals between sections and transports, the line extends over six hundred yards. In moving to a new place, one or two officers are sent ahead to do the billeting. They usually go by motor ambulance to the village stated in orders, find the town mayor or area commandant, are told by him what section is assigned to them for mess, billets, officers' mess, officers' quarters, transport, etc. The men either march or go by train, depending on the distance; and the transport moves on

under its own officers, arriving there with, or sometimes after, the men.

Our billets this first night were in Nissen huts at one end of a long row of similar quarters capable of accommodating thousands of men. A Nissen hut is a knock-down affair, consisting of a rounded, corrugated iron roof which reaches on either side below the floor. There is a door and two windows at each end, and the ceiling is supposed to be boarded over. So it is when the huts are first put together. But fuel is scarce, and these boardings make excellent firewood, so they are ripped off by an amateur Raffles when no one is looking. The result of numerous robberies of this kind is that the original comfort is gone and in its place is a draughty enclosure to which a barn heaped with manure is preferable.

The space between the men's and officers' quarters was covered with knee-deep mud. A few shell-holes, filled with yellow brown water, made walking precarious, particularly after sundown which, in the late fall, comes on shortly after four o'clock in the afternoon. But as it was necessary to get to the men and as we had no desire to swim in the

mud or drown in a shell-hole, we laid a row of duck-boards from one end of the field to the other.

I have often wondered what the origin of the word "duck-board" is. I have never heard of a duck walking on a particular board, nor do I think a sensible duck would walk on any of these if he could help it. The nearest I could get to the meaning was to think that one had to walk like a duck when on them—flap, flap along in duck-foot fashion. They must be a German invention, for they are just made for a broad, flat-footed person.

A duck-board is a ladder with the steps close together, put flat on the ground. If the ground is hard enough they remain on top, and safe walking is possible. But they soon sink deeper and deeper into the mire until they are submerged. If you get on them after they have been tramped over by a dozen men in muddy boots who have scraped off their dirty feet on them, you have to do a Spanish glide.

Once in a while some erstwhile individual takes out a slat and then your foot becomes firmly wedged in between the slat's neighbour. If the other does likewise, you have a fine pair of skis ready to hand.

To maintain your balance it is often wiser to limp with one foot on the duck-board and the other on the "terra mudda" beside it. French duck-boards differ from English ones in having rounded instead of flat slabs and so require a certain degree of French training to walk upon them. It is very disconcerting to glide along a duck-board on a dark, drizzly night, confident that you are safe, and then step on a slippery slat that lands you in a foot of mud. Some of the trenches are duck-boarded, but you'd never know it. The signs say so, but they are comfortably buried in the gurgling mud.

We spent two days in our wooden village behind the line and then received our orders to entrain to a rest area. Every one was overjoyed. For the men had been in the trenches ten days, fighting almost superhumanly. They were completely fagged out and needed a rest.

Morgan and I still held together. We had not seen or heard of Cook. Both of us were feeling fine, were much excited and wouldn't have cared a rap about a rest if it hadn't been that the next day was Thanksgiving.

Before Morgan left the base hospital, one of his

female nursing friends had given him a shoe-box full of goodies, "not to-be-opened before Thanksgiving." Morgan wouldn't have parted with it for a million dollars, and often when we were eating bully-beef and biscuits (hard-tack), I could see him eye the box. We hoped there was something looking like a turkey in it.

The men marched to the railroad station, about five miles away, early in the morning. I was detailed with one of the ambulances to remain at the station, until the afternoon, to take care of any casualties that might occur there. This station was merely a railroad siding in a sizable town (Bapaume), which no doubt had been beautiful but now was a shell-torn village of irregular, brick walls, unwindowed and roofless houses and improvised billets for men. It boasted of a Y. M. C. A., a large British expeditionary force canteen, a cinema in what was probably once the town hall, and an officers' club. On the streets was one continuous line of horse-drawn vehicles of all kinds, motor trucks, ambulances, staff cars; and men, hundreds and hundreds of them—as far as the eye could see.

Speaking of staff cars reminds me of the story

about the remark of a certain general when he was asked his opinion as to the advisability of the men wearing steel chest protectors. He replied to the inquiring individual:

"The chest protectors are excellent things. The front of them will protect our men along the road from the flying mud of our staff cars; the back of them will protect our men in the trenches from being hit by our own shrapnel."

Bapaume had been the scene of remarkable German viciousness and barbarity. The Huns had occupied it for a long time and when they were forced to retreat they dynamited most of the houses. In the large ones in which they were sure men and officers would be billeted, they set time-fuse bombs which would explode some days later. Considerable damage to property was done when they did go off, but fortunately very few men were injured.

As this village was on the main road, the Germans took particular delight in shelling it even at this time, and their aeroplanes, heavily laden with bombs, came over on little joy rides.

The scene at the station was a rather interesting one. Hundreds of joyful troops were there, and

more were coming all the time. The men in their proper companies were put into the cars, forty to a car; while the officers packed themselves into the cozy, third-class carriages. Men were running helter-skelter for rations, water for tea, and so on. The little train of fifty cars waited and waited until the two thousand odd men were aboard and then slowly toot-tooted out of the station.

In the afternoon a similar scene took place, and as I had no casualties I jumped on to the front seat of the ambulance and rode through a devastated country, thirty odd miles to the rest area, which every one was longing for so much.

CHAPTER IV

IT was miserably cold sitting with the driver on the front seat of the ambulance, but as the surrounding country had been the scene of recent battles there was enough to interest one. All signs of the cruelty of war had disappeared, except the cruelty to nature. Few trees could be seen, and those that were standing were stark and dead. The Boche had seen to that by cutting them through to the heart. Once in a while, high up between two branches, one could see a crude, wooden seat, the rest of a sniper or artillery observer. There were no birds, no flowers, no anything but vast wastes of mud, sharply outlined by innumerable trenches which waved endlessly, broken sharply and evenly by their traverses. Between the trenches rose rows of barbed wire, crossed and criss-crossed for a depth of twenty feet, wound round wooden or spiral iron stakes.

We at last approached Arras, one of the large,

war-ruined towns of which I had heard so much. It had been particularly noted for its ancient cathedral, which is now but a broken front of stone with nothing behind. The wondrous stained-glass windows, presenting scenes from the peaceful life of Christ, are no more. In the town square I stopped to inquire the way of the military police. It was good I did so; for as we rounded the corner, a deafening crash destroyed the pavement less than a hundred yard away from us.

An invisible Boche aviator from his plane had dropped a gentle reminder that he wasn't sleeping. We had to turn round and take another road.

It was my first real experience with bombs. At the time I was so surprised to see the solid pavement suddenly go up in the air that I didn't have time to be frightened. But I must confess that I never have gotten used to bombs and I've never found any one who has.

After innumerable difficulties which were added to by the ignorance of the military police along the way, I reached the village in which our ambulance was billeted well after dark, and reported to the commanding officer.

I had often heard of rest billets. Our quartermaster Lieutenant Parnell who, I fear, was a bit of a wag, had kept up my waning spirits by telling me of the wondrous comforts we were coming to.

"Wait till you get back to rest, old man," he repeatedly said to me. "No more hard floors to sleep on, but real downy French beds with fresh clean sheets in nice warm rooms. Perhaps you'll be billeted with some old French lady with daughters, who will make a fire for you in the morning and bring you a cup of hot tea before you get out of bed. I've been in places almost as good as home."

Naturally such visions made one long for the comforts that were not.

But there must have been a jinx on this village. It consisted of one street, on either side of which were four or five draughty barns. These barns were once built for cattle, but now, on the muddy floor, were ranged wire bunks for the men, in tiers of three. As each man had one blanket, you can imagine how much comfort he enjoyed. As a rule a man wrapped himself in his blanket in Indian fashion and used his overcoat for a covering. The

only trouble was that wire, separating two-inch-wide holes, isn't much protection underneath. In these barns, one hundred men could be uncomfortably housed; but for some reason or other, there were three times as many troops in the village as it could accommodate. Most of the men had to sit up all night or lie in the open fields.

The officers' quarters were all that the Q.-M. said they weren't. One waded through a manure-laden court-yard and churned through ankle-deep mud, until he came to something that resembled a one-story house. I went to investigate the place picked out for Morgan and myself. It was a stone-floored room, having one or two glass panes in the windows and a large quantity of oiled paper stuck in the frame. It had a peculiar smell—a musty smell of long decay. It might have been cleaned out once, but I don't believe it. There really was a bed in the room—a big double bed with two mattresses and a bolster.

I gave it the once over, picked off a few peculiar looking animals and decided that the floor was safer and cleaner.

After cleaning off a part of the floor to put my

bedding roll upon and spreading my toilet articles on the worm-eaten, mirrorless mantel, I went over to the officers' mess where the Q.-M. was hugging his feet before a fireless grate. He smiled at me weakly.

"How do you like it, Hays?" he asked. "I picked out the best quarters for you and Morgan. Pretty comfortable, aren't they?"

"Huh, huh," I replied. "Never saw anything finer. I'm going to telephone to Paris for a grand piano and lace curtains. Next time we move, let me do the billeting and I'll reciprocate." I wasn't going to let him know that I cared.

It was Thanksgiving Day, so after dinner, which had to be cooked on a primus stove—one of those little "petrol" affairs with a single burner—Morgan got out the shoe-box of goodies. We were both so tired that we didn't care if there wasn't a twelve-pound turkey inside. Morgan opened it up hastily. Inside were numerous little packages done up in tissue paper, containing dates, walnuts, candy and crackers. The dates were mouldy, the walnuts died during the journey, the candy—the regular taffy kind of all sorts of colours—stuck together, and the

crackers were soggy. Otherwise everything was all right. Morgan and I ate a rotten nut for sentiment's sake and we fed the rest to a stray mongrel who was used to French cooking. I never saw him again.

By the time we had slept in that room one night, and had waded through the mud a dozen times, and had shaved in a brown murky fluid from the well, called water, and had sat around in a cold mess waiting for a cold breakfast, Morgan and I decided there was much more comfort in a dug-out. Not having anything else to do, we wandered around to keep warm until the sun came out and shone into a room where we could sit.

We had eaten our midday meal and were sitting round the mess table censoring letters and writing home. I had just finished with a sentence, "We are comfortably billeted" (one always lies about such things when writing home) "in a beautiful, little French village where we shall stay for some time," when I heard the sharp notes of a bugle and an orderly came rushing in with a message for the C. O. He read it, jumped up excitedly and said, "Damn!"

"Back we go, men. Order here for all troops to proceed to the front in battle formation at once. Christie, you get the men together; Parnell, see that your stores are in the wagon; Emerson, you go ahead billeting at Courcelle-le-Grand" (a village about twenty miles away). "Morgan will stay with the ambulance and collect the sick; Hays will march with me, and Crosbie will take care of the transport."

The quiet, care-free scene of the morning had changed. Hundreds of troops were already standing at attention in the muddy main street, seventy-pound packs on their backs, steel helmets on their heads, shining rifles at their sides. Before I reached my billet, some of the companies were marching down the road to the singing tune of "Tipperary." Horses and mules were being brought up from the horse lines at a trot. Some were already hitched to their wagons and marching off, while others kicked, snorted and neighed as if they were much put out at this sudden change. Staff cars wormed their way at a furious rate through irregular lines of men, equipment, supply

wagons, half-lumbers, water carts, ambulances, horses and hospital supplies.

By four o'clock our field ambulance was on the march. Night was already settling down, and a penetrating chill in the air marked the drop in temperature. The men started off smartly to the accompaniment of a jumpy accordion, keeping in excellent formation in columns of fours, with the C. O. at the head of the column and other officers placed between the three sections. The transport trailed along behind.

This was my first long march, and I don't suppose I shall forget it as long as I live. I reckoned if we marched three miles an hour, fifty minutes of marching and ten minutes of rest, we would get to our destination in five or six hours. I felt fresh and full of pep for the first hour and even managed to be cheerful during the second. By this time, it was pitch dark and the poor accordion player had petered out. I noticed during the third hour that I leaned rather heavily on my cane and that my Canadian mackinaw felt like a ton of lead. During the fourth hour my left heel began to rub, and

I felt as though I were walking on a ball of fire. I certainly did think of my happy home. By this time the men were beginning to straggle along the road and the horses were foaming at the mouth.

We stopped for our ten minutes. The men threw themselves in the roadside ditch, using their packs for pillows. In a second a long line of fireflies seemed dimly to light the place—two hundred cigarettes held loosely between the lips of the Tommies, two hundred stems of tonic which would make the next go a little easier. I walked or rather limped up to the C. O.

"Anywhere near yet?" I asked.

"As far as I can judge, we're well on the way."

"What time do you think we'll pull in?"

"Sometime or other—no telling. I'm not quite sure of the road from here on."

He held a fast-fading, lighted flash-lamp over his map and studied it carefully.

"Attention!" he shouted when the ten minutes were up, and the men wearily formed themselves into line again.

"Carry on!" he ordered.

It is sad to relate but in this memorable fifth

hour the C. O. took the wrong turn where there was a sign marked to the "Airdrome," and after slopping over two miles of filthy country road we came to a blind. Oh, the misery of my tortured feet! oh, the disheartening agony of feeling you had walked two long miles for nothing and had to walk back over them again! Oh, the fiery, aching blister under my left heel!

There was nothing to be done but to turn round. This wasn't difficult for the men, but the heavy laden transports were on a narrow country road with banked, muddy fields on either side. I don't know how they were turned, but I heard the vigorous cussing of the drivers, the heavy breathing of the straining horses and the creaking of the wagon wheels as they churned the muddy road.

I had to admit to myself that I was all in. I was so bad that I didn't care whether I died on the spot or were taken prisoner. I couldn't hold out any longer with that heel of mine burning a hole into me that reached to my neck. The C. O. noticed my distress.

"Better get on a horse, old man," he called as he passed by.

I was that grateful that I almost smiled and got hold of the transport officer.

"Got a horse I can get on?" I limply called.

"Ever ridden one?"

"Almost twenty years ago," I answered. "But I don't care. Give me a gentle horse that I can go to sleep upon, not too high because I can't climb very far."

He led me to a dapple grey named Kaiser (wouldn't that get you?). Kaiser gave me a look and laughed at me in horsey fashion.

I patted him on the nose for good luck and then got the left stirrup ready. But to save my neck I couldn't lift my leg up high enough. I don't know just how I got on, but I think I held on to Kaiser's mane with one hand and on to his tail with the other and some one boosted me.

I felt great on that horse, way up in the air. Having to walk behind the soldiers didn't give Kaiser a chance to go very fast, and that suited me exactly. In a short time my perspiration dried and my feet forgot to bother me. Then the air got colder and colder, until my hands were icy cold, my nose was dripping and my legs were stiff. We

jogged on for the sixth hour and the seventh hour and the eighth hour, until I was frozen so stiff that the horse and I were one. I never sat so solidly on a horse before, and I was so frozen that I'm sure if Kaiser had galloped I'd have broken in two.

After eight hours of marching through the inky black night, we found ourselves after midnight in a broken-down village which fortunately still had an old German army hospital standing. Without delay the men were piled into the long huts, the horses were unhitched and watered and the officers found their billets which were havens of peace. The cooks had come by ambulance some hours before and so they had a steaming hot dinner ready for us in a room well warmed by a large wood fire.

CHAPTER V

COURCELLE-LE-GRAND was only halfway to the line, so early the next morning we had to get on the move again. The C. O. took pity on me and so gave me the "cushy" job of billeting, which meant riding to the new area in an ambulance. We were to go back to exactly the same territory we had come from three days before, and when I got there I was assigned to the same row of huts we had previously occupied. The ride in the ambulance had only taken an hour, but the marching party could not be expected for at least eight hours. Not only was the distance long, but the road was well-nigh impassable because of the countless traffic.

Up to this time I had no idea why we were called back. But now I heard all sorts or rumours, which, on account of my ignorance of the country, did not impress me very much. Of one thing I was sure —the army had made up its mind that it needed

more troops at the front and as quickly at they could get there.

Not having anything particular to do, I rummaged round until I found a can of bully-beef and a biscuit and sat down to a hearty meal. A tin of "bully" fills up your insides pretty well when you are hungry. But it's terrible not to have any water to wash it down with, particularly if you have spread it on hard-tack. If you want to see how it feels, buy a pound of corned beef and a box of Uneeda biscuits at the delicatessen and cut off the water pipes.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, I became restless and chilly. I had been sitting on a box in the doorway of my hut, watching the never-ending procession on the road and trying to make out whether the aeroplanes overhead were German or British. So I decided to take a walk as far as the sugar factory, which now is a mass of ruins and is used as a "watering point." As there was no room in the road to walk, I slopped in the ditch alongside.

When I had gone about halfway, I noticed a column of troops coming toward me, and leading

them was an officer whose head-gear in the distance looked decidedly familiar. Could it be an American? It was. And as they got nearer, I smiled with joy because it was Cookie limping doggedly along, a cigar, as usual, stuck in the middle of his face.

I rushed over, saluted the English officer by his side and trailed along.

"Hello, Cookie," I said. "Gee, I'm glad to see you."

He looked at me in an anxious sort of way.

"Hello," he whispered hoarsely.

"Had a long march?" I asked.

"Huh, huh," was the monosyllabic reply.

I wondered what was the matter. I never saw such a look of agony on a man's face. He was a pale yellow, there were deep circles under his eyes and a smudge on one cheek, as if he had wiped a dirty glove over it. He forced himself to walk steadily.

Again I started questioning him.

"When did you start back?"

"Got orders 'bout twelve o'clock last night," he groaned. "Started at half-past twelve. We've

been walking ever since. Don't think we are ever going to stop. I lost my voice about two hours ago. Can't even enjoy a smoke."

It was then four o'clock in the afternoon, so you can see it was some walk. I left when we came to our billets and that's the last I saw of Cook. Later I heard that he was taken sick next day, some throat trouble, was sent to a hospital and eventually became attached to a labour battalion.

Our men, dog-tired, marched in about eight o'clock that night. The officers were all in too, and said it was a worse march than the night before because the road was jammed with troops and transports, and at times they had to stand in the road for a half hour to an hour until the mix-up in front was straightened out. At one point, a messenger on a motorcycle came rushing along, and in trying to dodge some troops he skidded on the slippery road, smashed into a three-ton truck and stove in his head. They carried him and his machine over to the side of the road and left him there. No one had time for anything more, and if they had they couldn't have gotten him through the jam.

Before we sat down to dinner our orders for the next day arrived. We were to proceed on foot to a village a few kilometres away. This was very satisfactory, for we could get there early and settle before the daylight faded. Shortly after dinner we "turned in," a weary crowd, who were anxious to get in between their blankets to keep warm. It had grown so cold that the murky water in the shell-holes froze over.

Even under the worst conditions life is bearable, if you have cheerful companions around you. When the five of us got under our covers in our blanket rolls, laid on wire beds, we were almost happy, and chaffed one another in good old-fashioned style. There was Captain Emerson, the cheeriest Irishman I ever saw, who was most happy when things were at their worst. He just looked for trouble so that he could tell it to go to the devil. He always had a kind word for the men and was much loved by them, and he put himself out to do favours for the officers. Like many Irishmen, he had a hasty temper but cooled off quickly. Then there was dear old Crosbie just back from a month's leave, during which time he

was spliced to his own true love. He was big, handsome and modest, so modest that I never did find out how he got the Military Cross. After him comes our dapper little quarter-master, Parnell, who was wishing that the —— war were over and that the —— Germans were in hell. He was an extremely efficient soldier having been in a territorial ambulance as sergeant major, and so knew the ranks thoroughly. And finally we come to our American friend Morgan, big and cheery and bubbling over with enthusiastic joyfulness. I knew Morgan would take, and take he did, good and hearty.

We all slept soundly until seven in the morning, although there had been a fearful bombardment on nearly all the night. Our batman came in in the morning with cups of hot tea, which they either placed on the floor beside us or in our hands if we were awake enough to take them. Then they brought us hot shaving water in another cup and our boots, off of which they had scraped the thick mud and had shined them until they were smart enough to walk with on Fifth Avenue.

By this time I had learned some of the English-

man's good habits and some of his bad habits too. Not very bad ones, but the first bad habit I had to learn was how to drink tea. An Englishman takes a cup before he gets up, after he gets up, two or three for breakfast, one or two for lunch, and then at four o'clock in the afternoon he takes "tea." Now, before I came over here, I had had numerous arguments with my wife about tea, which she persisted, for no known reason, in serving at lunch. I didn't like it and wouldn't like it, and even learned to drink buttermilk in its place. But over here it is hard to get good coffee, and so I fell gradually into the tea habit and became such an *habitué* that my stomach rang for its tea at four o'clock every afternoon. I even took a cup before I got out of bed in the morning.

The next habit I got into was keeping clean. I had always managed to be presentable at home, but there I didn't have to use the seat of my trousers for a napkin and I had a chance to wash more than once a day. Moreover, I was allowed sufficient water so that I didn't have to worry about dividing a quart between my hands, face, hair and teeth. It is an axiom in the British army that

"clean troops fight better," and so men and officers must shave every morning. Many a time, later on, we had to get up in the wee small hours of the morning, when one candle was shared by four or five of us standing over our mirrors.

I adopted a system of shaving in bed, which all of them laughed at at first but adopted later on. I must have looked funny, for I wore a khaki-knitted helmet over my head and face, and wrapped a plaid Irish shawl around my shoulders which I kept in place with a horse blanket safety-pin. The officers called me "Peary," because I looked like the North Pole. I would lift my helmet off my face and in a semi-sitting position get out my shaving soap, razor and brush. My tin cup held the hot water, pretty cold by the time I got at it. I'd lather my face, place my mirror between my knees and, balancing myself with one hand behind me, screw my face tight and run the razor over it. In a few days everybody was doing it.

I also developed a system of washing. I had with me a folding canvas basin and a tin cup. My batman filled my basin with hot water. First I'd take out some for the cup and lay my tooth

brush next to it. I had a little soft sponge with which I washed my face and then I wet my hair. My shaving came next. I'd rinse off the blade of the safety razor in my tooth brush cup, so there were short little hairs all around the edge and some floating around in the soapy water. After shaving, I'd use the sponge (sponges don't show the dirt half as much as wash rags) again on my face. Now the shaving water was thrown into the basin and the cup cleaned out for new water from my canteen for my teeth. Before I used that, however, I'd wash my hands in the basin and then brush my teeth and expectorate into it. Thus I was clean from the neck up and from the wrists down and my basin contained soap, water, microscopic hairs, dirt from my hands and a moderate amount of saliva and tooth paste. After my ablutions were over, the water was thrown out and the basin packed away. In a week there was enough stuff in the bottom to make it nice and slimy.

I had with me two small Turkish towels. One was dirty after a few weeks, but when I brought out the other one I couldn't tell the difference. Then I had my batman wash them and I couldn't

tell the difference. So after that I never troubled to have towels washed and I used khaki handkerchiefs because they wouldn't show the dirt.

But to get on with our journey again. We got into our new home shortly after noon. I thought we had lived in some pretty rough places, but we seemed to be going from bad to worse. In the first place, we had many more troops here than the village could accommodate. The officers were given six Nissen huts, which we had to share with officers of two other organizations, and the men were quartered in large Adrian huts. These latter differ from Nissen huts in being about six times as large and ten times as draughty. They are about a hundred feet long and about twenty-five feet wide, having numerous places for windows, a roof that always leaks, a dirt floor that is always damp. There are wide doors at either end that never close squarely. Wire bunks are ranged on either side, one on top of the other, so that there is sleeping room for one hundred and forty men. Most times the men light braziers made of five-gallon tins which smoke up the interior until it looks warm.

The worst part of it was we couldn't get water. The wells around there were unhealthy, and so the only water available was in the numerous shell-holes which filled the space between the men's quarters and ours. Somehow or other, Jimmie, my batman, of whom I shall have a lot to say later on, managed to get me enough clean water to shave with in the morning. But the men had a hard time, for it was zero weather. A half dozen of them would get round a shell-hole, break the ice and scrub themselves vigorously, using the dirty water in the hole. Some used the water for shaving, while others who had managed to get some tea, saved a little at the bottom of their cups so they could put something warm on their faces to lather with.

At the end of twenty-four hours we were on the move again. We started out on a bright, crisp, sunny afternoon. Everybody was glad to get away from that awful place. We couldn't imagine anything worse. But when we had marched about ten kilometres and found ourselves in a deserted, ruined village called Moislans, with no sign of habitation, we wondered what was coming next.

At one far end, down a muddy country road, we found a dressing station, which was already occupied by another ambulance. But they loaned us a field near by in which our men could put up a row of tents for themselves, while the officers were shoved into a corner of one of the large, hospital huts which wasn't really very bad, for it was dry and fairly warm and had some good, strong wire beds in it. We managed to commandeer a shack for our mess too, and with a great deal of trouble got hold of something that looked like a stove. The Q.-M. always carried a bag of coal in his supplies, so we had a fire going in short order. Then the mess servants brought in a few wooden boxes loaded with bully-beef, biscuits and so on, which we were allowed to use as seats.

I wondered how long we were going to stay here, but I wasn't kept long in suspense.

Our cook had somehow arranged a good dinner for us, to which we sat down at about eight o'clock. It's wonderful the kind of food one gets at the front. Everything of the best goes up there. It is better grub than at the base. Moreover, the

food comes up regularly every day so that it was seldom that we were without fresh meat, and eggs were such an every-day affair that we groused when we didn't get them. The only thing that I missed was fresh fruit. The canned variety you could get any time.

For breakfast we usually had a porridge, which was often far better than we get at home. Sometimes we had fresh milk for it, but more often we had to use "Carnation Brand." Eggs and bacon came next. We were only allowed one egg apiece, but the bacon was thick, almost as thick as a slice of ham. Then there was plenty of bread, and if we had a good coal fire going we'd stand round it and make toast. Once in a while we had good French butter, but most often it was margarine. I've got so now that I can't tell the difference between margarine and butter except that one cuts soft and the other cuts crispy. I remember going out to dinner one night in the far past when I was a civilian in the States. The hostess served margarine instead of butter. It spoiled my appetite, and I couldn't eat and never after would I accept a dinner invitation from these people. It

was the same when I was first served rabbit and thought that it was chicken until I got hold of the back-bone. But now? I love rabbit all greased over with margarine better than anything. We would end the mess with tea, unless some one from the States was good enough to send over some G. Washington coffee.

For luncheon we had a stew of some kind, with boiled potatoes or a hash or a "camouflaged" bully-beef. A good cook always disguises it so that it doesn't taste or look like "bully." Our cook was a genius in camouflaging. Sometimes the "bully" was covered in a mound of potatoes, at other times it was surrounded with carrots. Again he would bury it in H. P. sauce and green peppers. This course would be followed by cheese, either Swiss or American, depending on the quarter-master, and a pudding of tapioca, rice or wheatina. The pudding was usually rather tasteless, but that never bothered the cook any because he knew we would drown it in marmalade or jam. Then of course we had tea.

At four in the afternoon, we, with the rest of the British Army, would stop work and have tea

again, usually accompanied by some good Scotch raisin cake which Christie got from home once a week. Finally we would end up the day with dinner.

This meal is a ceremony. Whether you get anything to eat or not, doesn't make any difference. You must put on your Sam Browne belt, look clean and wait for the C. O., for no one is supposed to sit down to the table before he does. The dinner may be ready by seven-thirty and everybody there, but the C. O., who may be taking a nap. So you all sit round, twiddling your thumbs or smoking numerous cigarettes until eight-thirty when some one conceives the brilliant idea of waking him up. On one occasion, we couldn't find the C. O. anywhere and waited and waited until nine o'clock, which made the cook so mad he almost swore.

Dinner is usually served in courses on a tablecloth. The tablecloth we had was changed at every meal, but you never would notice it unless the spot that somebody made the night before when he spilled his soup happened to come around to your place. I was told that the tablecloth was

nice and white, but I can't believe it. In the three weeks I saw it on the table, it never once suggested its natural colour. Before we got done with it (it died of over-use after a while) it had more colours than a Persian rug. Napkins were considered superfluous affairs, and so we never had any. I don't know where I wiped my hands most of the time, but I believe that it was somewhere near the seat of my trousers. Once in a while I used my handkerchief. It's wonderful how clean you can keep your hands if you lick off every speck of sticky food. The first course was a hot, greasy soup, which was followed by fresh roast-beef, potatoes—sometimes French fried, sometimes boiled, often mashed—and a fresh vegetable, most often string beans. We left out the salad course. The dessert was either another pudding or rice and canned fruit, or a nice apple pie, and of course we ended up with a savoury and coffee. When you are with the English you must eat savouries or else you are insulting. But I never could understand them because they are mostly like our appetizers at home, sardines on toast or any old thing to give you an appetite.

Maybe the idea is to give you an appetite for breakfast in the morning.

Our cook and mess servants tried their hardest to give us good things to eat and we appreciated it. We had a habit of bragging about our cook who had been a chef in a large hotel in Paris before the war. The result of it was that the news of his good qualities got to Staff Headquarters and as they had a rotten cook they sent an order detaching our man from us and attaching him to them. The cook was mad clean through, the C. O. raised an awful howl, but it didn't do any good and off he went. About a week later, he suddenly appeared one morning with all his equipment and a note from the General to the C. O. which read, "I have given this man back to you. He's the worst cook I ever saw. Couldn't cook one decent meal. Yesterday he put catsup in the tea." The C. O. read the note and looked up at the man and smiled.

"What was the matter?" he asked.

"Aw, nothin', sir," the cook answered, "I wants to come back so I queered the game until he lets me go."

We had just finished our savoury that evening, when an orderly knocked on the door, came in, saluted the C. O., and handed him some orders. He glanced over them hurriedly.

"Well, our little party is over," he said. "The second in command and Morgan are to go up the line immediately. Robinson is to report to a battalion. Captain Crosbie and Hays are to report at the main dressing station before one P. M. tomorrow. The Q.-M. and I stay here for the present."

Although we had heard the pounding of the guns for two days and knew that a fierce battle was on only a few miles away, we had up to now received no definite orders. Our circle broke up hastily. Captain Christie went to gather the thirty stretcher bearers who were to go with him, while I went out and helped Morgan pack his kit. I hated to have him go. I had looked over the map and had seen that the advanced dressing station they were bound for was in a little village which we had taken only a few days before and which the Huns were shelling heavily.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY the following morning Crosbie and I started out with twenty men for our new quarters. The day was gloriously sunny, the clear blue sky without a cloud. The roads had dried or frozen sufficiently to make walking fairly decent. We left camp by a back road, crossing the canal by the only passable bridge. Then we marched on to a high country road from which we could look down on the surrounding country and see the dozens of camps dotting the landscape. Near us was a large artillery camp, the horses drawn up in a long line, the ammunition wagons in precise rows in front. Long lines of tents, some white, some brick red, others variously camouflaged, were formed in squares. Aeroplanes buzzed overhead, and from the north one heard the crump, crump of shells or the heavy thunder from the guns. Our road started off well, but within a short time deep shell-holes, some large enough to run from one

side of the road to the other, made marching difficult, and the few transport wagons we passed were having a hard time of it. It was impossible for the horses to avoid the shell-holes. First they would fall into one, pull themselves out, and then the wagons would fall in and the horses would have to strain and struggle to pull them out. After three miles of this road we came to the main thoroughfare again and from there on had no difficulty.

We reached the main dressing station about noon. This station lies between an A. D. S. and a C. C. S., and not only takes care of walking wounded but is an evacuation point for the ambulance. This one was at Fins on the right of the main road and was wonderfully laid out. There was an "in" and "out" road, which led up to the receiving huts, three in number. These were large Adrian huts, partitioned off inside, so that the first room, well heated by oil stoves and coal fires, received the cases. The second or inner section was the operating room, which was ordinarily lighted by electricity generated by a dynamo on the premises. When this gave out, acetylene

lamps or candles were used. The third room housed the wounded while they were waiting for the ambulances to take them on further. Here the padre would work, handing out hot tea to the poor, wounded Tommies or running round with packages of cigarettes.

Besides these three main huts there were a half dozen others of similar size for waiting cases, walking wounded, sick patients, gas patients, and so on. To the right were the officers' quarters, Nissen huts, in which were comfortable iron cots with mattresses and little invalid tables. To the left were row on row of tents for the personnnel and overflow, and behind it all were the horse and wagon lines.

The Captain and I sought out the C. O., who greeted us cordially and asked us to form part of his mess. He was a fine type of soldier. He was a territorial but had practised medicine before the war, so he knew his medicine and his soldiery well. His men idolized him, and his officers obeyed him faithfully and without question.

Within an hour after our arrival we were assigned to a gas ward, which meant that we were

to take care of all patients suffering from gas poisoning.

I am not at liberty to tell you of the various kinds of gas used or the effects upon the men, except in a general way. Formerly the Germans used a "wave" gas, which had a deadly effect, particularly if it caught the men before they could apply their masks. This gas depended a great deal on the action of the wind, which often didn't act as the Germans wanted it to so they were frequently caught in their own gas. During the past two years the enemy has depended partly on gas thrown over in shells, but fortunately we have learned to tell the difference between a gas and a high velocity shell, so that a gas alarm is sounded before many casualties occur.

To give you an idea of the irritating effects of gas, let me relate what happened when I came into the mess for dinner the day I had been through the gas school. I had come back late and so had no time to change my clothes. It was a cold, damp night, so all the windows were closed in the large dining-room where forty of us ate. A coal fire was burning. On my right sat the British

Quarter-master, a likable chap who had a most droll way of talking. On my left sat a padre. I didn't notice the Quarter-master until his eyes brimmed over and a tear fell in his soup. Then the padre watered his soup too, and a man at the next table began to sneeze. In ten minutes everybody was sneezing or crying or rubbing his eyes. I became the most unpopular man in the room. Then the C. O. got up, saying he had "hay-fever," and before long, every man trooped out, leaving me to finish my meal alone. After I had taken off my clothes that night, there was enough gas left in my hair and on my skin to make me feel sick at my stomach, and the next day on rounds in the hospital the Sister caught it and sneezed her head off. That afternoon I took a bath and changed all my clothes.

Crosbie and I had a special ward for gas cases. Fortunately no more cases came in than we could conveniently handle, and these were mainly walking cases. The chief complaints were the burning of the eyes and the harsh, dry cough. We had about fifty comfortable beds in the ward and two large coal fires. So we were able to keep the men

warm. After bathing their eyes, our chief duty was to see that they were placed in bed and given plenty of hot tea—and a cigarette. It doesn't make any difference how badly off a Tommy is, he must have a cigarette, even when he is coughing so hard that he can hardly get his breath. If he can't smoke the cigarette when you hand it to him, he'll stick it behind his ear and carry it there until he does get enough breath.

As the ward was so much warmer than our own billet and as we were on twenty-four hour duty, we moved our kits into it and slept there. During the day we sat near the stove, writing letters home, and at night we'd talk ourselves to sleep.

It's wonderful how close men get to each other when they haven't any one else for company and have to sit on two wooden boxes in front of a fire all day long. Crosbie was one of those quiet-voiced Irishmen, whose heart was too big for his body, although he tipped the scale at one hundred and seventy-five pounds. For three years he had been with a battalion where I know, from reliable information, he risked his life more than once. There never was a man more popular with a

battalion and he was well liked by the whole brigade from the General down. I received evidence of this when the General of his old brigade dropped in to see him one morning for a chat. He would never have left the battalion if his new wife hadn't made him feel that he had done his bit there and that she would feel more sure of him away from the line.

After five days we had almost talked ourselves out. He had told me about his wife, his housekeeper, his chauffeur, his home, the little bungalow he had in the country, the amusing cases in his practice, the peculiarities of his patients, and the differences between Carson and the Sinn Feiners. I learned all about the Irish National Movement, about the riot on that famous Easter morning, the formation of the Ulster Volunteers. In return, I told him how to be a nose and throat specialist, went him one better in bragging about my wife because I had known her longer than he had his, showed him her picture and that of my little boy which I carried in a leather case next to my heart, told him how to bring up children so that if he ever had any he wouldn't make a mistake, ex-

panded about the nice home I once had, mentioned that I sang "My Country, 'tis of Thee" whenever he sang "God Save the King," and even went into secret family matters that I wouldn't have told to any one else unless I was drunk. He asked how I happened to go into the war.

"I've always been a toy soldier," I told him. "One of the kind that liked to march on Decoration Day and look handsome in a uniform. For years I had preached medical preparedness. So when the time came to show the folks that I was willing to be a real soldier, I wrote to Washington saying that they could have me. They took me two weeks after war broke out. There's another reason too—if my boy ever has to serve his country, I want his father's example before him to show him the right thing to do. My wife is a true blue American—her family have been there since Noah's Ark—and so she made it easy for me by smiling and saying she wouldn't have me funk. Guess it's harder on the women than it is on us."

"Guess it is," he replied; "particularly when they are worrying about us up in the trenches. I

had a funny thing happen to me one time, a thing that might have been real serious too. My battalion was going into an exceptionally hot place and so before I left I wrote two letters of farewell, one to my fiancée and one to my father, mushy letters full of heart-rending dribble which a man never wants read until he's dead. I gave the two letters to a padre at headquarters and told him to hold on to them. I made him understand that I didn't want them mailed until he was sure that I had gone 'West.' My aid-post was in a devilish spot, in a trench half full of water and open to the wily Boche who rained thousands of bullets into it. Often a bullet would come whizzing through the door of my dug-out, which faced the enemy and was only a few feet deep. On the second day, I got word that a soldier had dropped a bomb amongst his companions and that some of them were killed and others injured. They were at an outpost about a hundred yards off which no man could get to in the daytime without being seen the whole distance. But I had to get there, and, I tell you, when I started I was mighty thankful that I had written those letters. I never got to

any place quicker in my life. I did a hundred yard sprint and although a hail of bullets came my way, I wasn't scratched. I fixed up the injured men and waited until dark for the return journey. After five days in the trenches, we came back in reserve. I asked the Padre for my letters.

" 'I mailed them,' he said.

" 'For God's sake,' I yelled. 'Didn't I tell you to hold them until you knew I was dead?'

"The silly fool had stuck my letters in his pocket and a few days later took them out, forgot my instructions and put them in the mail-bag. Fortunately my fiancée got a field card from me, dated a day later than the postmark on the letter, and knew that I was all right. But the old man was in a bad way until my cable came."

On the sixth day he and I were ordered over to an operating hut where we were to receive and treat the wounded from eight in the morning until four in the afternoon. The three surgical huts were worked in eight-hour shifts with two officers and a number of R. A. M. C. men in each one. There was plenty of work for two men to do, as

you may well imagine, but we had been having a lazy time of it so we didn't mind.

I shall never forget my first impression of the working room of the operating hut. Although I had practised medicine a number of years, had seen the most serious kinds of surgical operations, had performed many serious operations myself, I got so dizzy and sick at my stomach at what I saw that I had to get outside for a breath of fresh air.

I stepped in there the night of the first day to see what was going on. Outside the hut, the ambulances were lined up in the drizzling rain, and the orderlies were pulling out the stretchers laden with wounded soldiers. They were gently carried into the receiving room where the stretchers were laid in rows on the floor. Some of the men were unconscious, others not, but each one bore his torture bravely. Not a groan did I hear. The heavily blanketed figures were like so many wax images.

The operating room was well lighted by an electric fixture over each patient. The windows were covered so that no light showed outside to

make a target for enemy bombs. Orderlies were moving swiftly to and fro. Stretchers were laid on wooden horses so that the men could be attended to without having to move them too much. Whenever a case was finished, the stretcher was lifted up by two orderlies, the wooden horses were removed from underneath and the patient transported to the evacuation room. The operating room was partly warmed by a large coal stove and a number of "blue-flame" oil stoves, which could be put under the stretcher to warm the patient up while his wound was being dressed. The orderlies wore aprons which were damply spotted with blood. There was no place to wash one's hands thoroughly, so one had to be careful not to touch the insides of the dressing. The two officers worked with their overcoats on. It was impossible to stay in a hut for eight hours at night without one on. They would do the dressing or direct the orderlies. Instruments were few—scissors, a scalpel, a probe, but there were hundreds of dressings, plenty of cotton, splints and bandages.

I shall not dwell on the fearful wounds. They are every-day occurrences and a part of the game.

It isn't pleasant to describe a piece of shrapnel, a piece about the size of a chestnut, covered with spurs, sticking into a man's thigh. Nor is it pleasant to look at a man's face while the surgeon, as gently as he can, probes down in a wound, enlarges the opening and extracts the foreign body with a forceps. But it is pleasant to see the grateful look on the man's face when the M. O. hands the bullet or piece of steel to him all wrapped up in a clean piece of gauze. It's the man's best souvenir, and tells more than words that he was willing to sacrifice his life for his country and his God.

Two things in that operating hut force themselves on my memory—one, the remarkable cheerfulness and courage of the wounded men; the other, the skill and gentleness of the British orderly.

The majority of the wounded had had first-aid dressings put on either by a comrade or the officer in a regimental aid post or in an advanced dressing station. Some of them had been wounded for hours before they were found by stretcher bearers and had lain in shell holes or at the bottom of dirty trenches. They were caked with mud.

Their faces were smudgy and unshaved, their hands were cracked from the cold, their clothing was frozen into stiff folds, their boots, which oftentimes hadn't been off for days, carried an inch or two of clayey soil. Yet within the covering of dirt were clean souls that shined out of their eyes. When you spoke to them, they smiled, actually smiled, although they were suffering agony; unless it was some fellow whose face and head were swathed in bandages which hid an ugly ragged hole in the cheek or in the scalp. They had all been suffering from the cold and they were more anxious to get warm than anything else. Often when the orderly would give them a cup of tea and the Padre would hand them a cigarette and a lighted match, they would sink back contentedly as much as to say, "This bloody war ain't so bad after all." I saw men with fractured thigh bones, sometimes the ends protruding through the skin, calmly lie on their stretchers smoking cigarettes while the M. O. and the orderlies pulled the fragments into place and fixed the legs firmly in a Thomas' splint. When it was all over they would say, "Thank you."

It is hard to analyze courage. There must be

something in a man's soul that makes him cheerfully face the greatest dangers, suffer the worst wounds calmly, and even be willing to sacrifice his life for his country. These men are ordinary men, many of whom would raise an awful howl if they sprained their ankles at home. I saw a striking example of this a few weeks later when we were far behind the line, and where a stray rat running across your path will almost scare you to death. A number of men in a near-by village were having machine-gun practice. Dummy bullets were used, but somehow a live one got in this particular time and in its course it hit three Tommies. It went through one man's arm, another man's leg and seared the abdomen of a third. When they came to the ambulance they were howling with pain and were completely demoralized. Now, if this had happened on the battle line, they would have come back smiling, proudly pointing to their wounds and talk about Blighty. There's a great difference between an Acc. wound and a G. S. wound, not in the wound itself but in the man's feelings and morale.

The skill and gentleness shown by the average R. A. M. C. orderly is truly remarkable. Before these youngsters get out to the front they are put through a severe course of training lasting a year or more, in which they learn, practically and theoretically, all the duties of a trained nurse. They can bandage, take temperatures, give hypodermic injections and put on splints. A great deal of the actual work at the front has to be done by these men, of course under the direction of a medical officer, but they are frequently "on their own" when they are sent out as stretcher bearers. These men may have rough exteriors and may not have the refinements of education, but they could teach many female nurses, and some doctors too, the art of handling the patients gently and tenderly. Perhaps some of them have been through the mill themselves and know what a battle wound feels like. I've seen them pet a wounded Tommy like a baby and use endless time and patience in cutting away a man's clothing from a wound and removing the soiled, dried, sticking dressing. Those of the R. A. M. C. who are left after the war will

profit by this training, for they have looked into other men's souls and felt the good effects of lessening the suffering of their fellow men.

In a way Crosbie and I enjoyed our few days in the operating hut. On the day shift there are not as many serious cases as at night, but we had plenty to do. I always kept a box of good cigarettes so that after I had finished a dressing I could hand one to a poor fellow who so patiently allowed me to fix him up. Early one morning, a Boche plane flew over the hospital and dropped a bomb about a thousand yards away, where a number of pioneers were working. About thirty were killed and as many injured. The injured were brought in to us. Awful, awful! It is impossible to describe these wounds—but it was the first time I had seen a chest wall ripped away, exposing the beating heart. We got the man out of our place alive, but he died on the way to the C. C. S.

CHAPTER VII

IN our mess at this dressing station were a number of young American medical officers loaned to the C. O. from various ambulances. I was very glad to see them, and was particularly interested to see how they behaved themselves and whether they stood up well under the terrific strain. Most of them were big strapping fellows, who were very keen and who were only too glad to go out into the most dangerous places and do their bit. They came from various States, most of them from small towns. They had had practically no military training before coming over here and therefore were decidedly handicapped. But they kept their eyes open and, being real gentlemen, it wasn't very long before they learned their new tricks and became very efficient officers.

I don't know what impression the English had of us before our entrance into the war, but I'm inclined to think they were afraid we were going

to try to tell them how to run the army when we did get there. They thought that we were coming over with all sorts of "high-falutin' " ideas. They didn't expect us to be willing to learn. I'm sure the Irish Tommy, who had never left his rural district before the war, was convinced that Americans were divided into two classes—Indians and politicians.

Emerson and I were talking about it one morning.

"I am glad you and Morgan came to us," he said. "You are sure some surprise. I don't know what I expected an American officer to be like, except I thought he'd come in with a know-it-all air. You see, our impression of you Americans before the war was founded on the pictures in the comic papers and the samples you sent over to show us how to spend money. Once in a while we saw a Cook's tour which didn't impress us any, except the women wore awful clothes and the men wore awful high collars. We never knew there were Americans who could just sit tight, like you and Morgan, and try to learn. Why, you two are regular fellows, not a bit different from us."

"Thank you, old man," I said. "All I knew about Irish gentlemen was that they kissed the Blarney stone and often came to America to boss the Government. I'm only too glad to learn the military game from you."

There were two ways you could tell the American officers—first, because they didn't dress as neatly as the Englishmen, and secondly, because they would invariably smoke cigars after a meal if they could get them, while the English officers were satisfied with pipes or cigarettes. Most of these men were very anxious to get over to the American Army, although most of them were more than satisfied with the overwhelming kindness shown them. Their chief reason for wanting to change was that they felt their chances for promotion would be greater.

I took occasion at this time to write to the Chief Surgeon of the American Forces, General Alfred E. Bradley, whom I had known before the war. I spoke of all the American officers I had met in the most glowing terms, told of their willingness to face any danger, their tireless energy, and their courtesy. I said the only complaint I had heard

from them was that they were afraid they would never get over to the American Army. Incidentally I remarked that it would be an excellent thing to send out a lot of captains and majors, because they would learn the game from experienced teachers and this, in a short time, would help them to save thousands of lives which might be unnecessarily sacrificed because of their ignorance of the military game. The General replied a few weeks later. I was glad to show part of his letter to the officers I met—the part where he stated that all American officers with the British forces were being carefully followed, that they could apply for promotion through proper channels at any time, and that fortunately the American Army didn't need many doctors but that, when it did, a great many of the American officers with the British Army would be sent over to the A. E. F.

Of course one naturally expects to find a few men who "grouse"—men who probably had little practice at home, who were just learning surgery and who expected to find themselves in the operating room with knife in hand as soon as they landed in France. Moreover, in this class belong

a certain type of man (and he isn't peculiar to the United States) who is not a natural-born gentleman or else is not amenable to discipline. Another peculiar fact struck me—that the man who comes from a small town in the backwoods is the man who brags the loudest about America. Unfortunately we are often judged as a nation by the one man who happens to be in a particular organization of a foreign army, so that it is up to each and every one of us to make as good an impression as he can.

I met one young fellow out here who, I found out later, was particularly despised in the hospital where he had been an interne. Before our entrance into the war he had pro-German sympathies. He was the type who rubbed you the wrong way the first time you met him. At mess he was always butting in, even when the C. O. was speaking and "had the wind up" something awful.

I hadn't talked to him very long before he began to complain about the treatment he was receiving at the hands of the British.

"Wish I were with the American Army," he said. "You ain't appreciated over here. My C. O. is an

awful ass. The other day he stopped me and told me I'd have to learn to salute like a British officer."

"Must be something wrong with you," I answered sharply. "No C. O. acts that way if he is shown the proper respect. Ever been to a camp at home?"

"No," he replied.

"Well, you could learn something there," I concluded.

A few nights later six of us American officers were in bed shortly after nine o'clock when another of our fellows, a new man, came in. We greeted him cordially. He got into his bed and then a general "knocking" went on. I listened patiently. Finally this fellow chimed in.

"I told my C. O. to go to hell the other day. We had been walking a long distance and I was tired, so when a lorry came by I jumped on and rode to our destination and waited for the bunch. When the C. O. saw me there he bawled me out something awful—told me I should have asked his permission. I got mad and told him where he could go. Glad I did too. These fellows think

they are the whole cheese and that they can do as they like with us."

I could stand it no longer. I jumped out of bed and right there on the cold floor in my pyjamas I lambasted those fellows good and proper. First I lit into the one who had been talking and then lit into one of the others.

"I want to tell you a thing or two," I shouted excitedly, turning to the new arrival, "and you soak it in good and plenty. I happen to know a little more about the army than you do and besides I'm your superior officer here. Our Government ought to be ashamed to send over a man like you. Do you know what would have happened to you if you had talked to an officer in your own army like that? You'd either be court-martialled or kicked out of the army. I wish you were under me. I'd make your life one hell on earth until you learned to behave yourself like a gentleman. It's a d—— shame that all Americans have to be judged by one fellow who doesn't know what it is to be true blue.

"Now," I said, turning to the other, "I want to give you men some good sound advice. Behave yourselves like gentlemen and you'll receive the

consideration you deserve. Try to remember that you've got to learn discipline before you can be an efficient soldier and, for God's sake, don't go around with a chip on your shoulder looking for trouble. I've been with an ambulance too and in all my life I've never seen fellows who tried harder to make things pleasant, from the C. O. down. If I found many fellows from the U. S. A. like you two fellows here, I'd walk out into No Man's Land and commit suicide."

I believe there are quite a few hundred Americans with the Allied forces. I have met dozens of them. The majority are not only well liked but the Allies have often said they wouldn't know what to do without them. Morgan was one of the kind who was always well loved by every officer and man with him; Unger, from Chicago, was another; then there was Robinson, from Cleveland, and King, from somewhere in Connecticut. I could name dozens of others. I was mighty proud of them all. And these fellows all rave about the wonderful consideration shown to them. They, and I, tried hard to make our Allied friends understand that we were there to help them and to learn.

Unfortunately, there are always a few undesirables whom I would like to see called back and sent to school until they learned how to behave themselves. The English C. O.'s are made of too fine stuff. They won't complain.

CHAPTER VIII

DURING my stay at the main dressing station, the Huns shelled us day and night, sometimes with high velocity shells, often with gas shells, so that we never ventured out of doors without our gas masks at "the alert." The firing was particularly murderous at daybreak and at sundown. I never saw or heard the early morning firing, because I didn't believe in waking up before seven o'clock. But I used to stand out in the grounds round five in the afternoon and watch the shells go over.

One doesn't get particularly excited at long-distance firing, unless a shell falls short and hits up the earth around him. The Huns weren't as much interested in us as in the ammunition dump across the road. They tried for this very hard. You could hear the shell swish through the air, coming nearer and nearer until you felt it going

over your head and then you would hear a "crump" in the field opposite, followed by a huge cloud of smoke and flying dirt. Once in a while a "dud" would fall. This is a shell that does not explode when it hits the ground. Curious Tommies used to pick them up, but they've learned to leave them alone as they have a nasty habit of going off in your dress-suit case just when you've made up your mind to bring them home as souvenirs to your best girl. I didn't see many gas shells, but I smelled them. As there were no men over in the field and as the ammunition didn't mind a little gas, they did no harm. One night one of them landed on the hospital road, and two men were slightly overcome.

It isn't pleasant to be serenaded during your dinner by the hum of a thousand shells, particularly when your mess shack is a little hut that the wind could blow over. No one got the wind up particularly, but I noticed that every time they whined close by overhead, every one would duck involuntarily until his nose was almost in his soup. But the talk and ragging would go on just the same.

About five o'clock one morning two shells landed in the hospital grounds. No one was hurt. I was told about it and so after breakfast I went out to look at the holes. There's no use losing sleep over trifles.

On the third day, some one came in and said they heard that Morgan had been captured and that Christie had become separated from his men. But later in the morning Morgan turned up like a bad penny and told us the most harrowing story. He lost himself the first night and finally ended up in a dug-out where he found an M. O. who needed help. He hadn't had a wink of sleep in forty-eight hours, but he was as cheerful as ever and ready to go back again as soon as he could locate himself.

I had been told that American engineers were a short distance away, so one morning I went over to visit them. I was naturally curious to know how they were getting along, for I heard stories of the wonderful account they had given of themselves during the recent fight. They were running a narrow-gauge railroad up to the front line, bringing up ammunition and rations. They had little

two-penny cars attached to gasolene locomotives whose engines were in sideways like those on the gasolene grass-cutters we see in Central Park.

I cut across the fields. Just before I came out to the main road, I walked into a huge cemetery. The grave-diggers were digging dozens of new graves alone one side of the square of hundreds of wooden crosses, each one of which bore a little aluminium plate with the name, number, rank, and company of the dead soldier. Opposite them were a number of oblong, blanketed rolls with tags tied on them. A narrowing at the ends with a huge bulge in the centre pointed out, all too plainly, that they were the bodily remains of valiant men. It made me sick at heart. But such is war.

Across the road was a wide-gauge railway on the tracks of which were flat cars containing the most peculiar looking objects. They were the tanks, of which we had all heard so much.

I ran across the road to get a closer view and was overjoyed to find that some of these giant caterpillars were going to perform for my particular benefit. One was on its way to the cars. It would creep along on its many-toed feet, dip

its nose into a shell-hole, raise it up again and then calmly walk right up on to the car. The thing that struck me particularly was that they made no more noise than an ordinary passenger automobile.

I was greeted very cordially by the officers of the Engineer Unit [1] and sat down to chat with them in their nice warm mess. Most of the talk was about home, of course, and then about the battle around us. Finally the conversation drifted towards tanks.

"Funny animals," the engineer Captain said. "They brought them here a day or so ago. It was a great sight watching them walking across the fields, up hill and down dale. Now you saw them and now you didn't. About a hundred came in yesterday. All day long they were prowling around, sticking their noses into everything. If they had trunks on them you'd want to go out with a bag of peanuts and feed them."

"You know the nights have been pretty cold round here and in order to keep the tanks from freezing they took them out to exercise every night. We almost aren't here to tell the tale. Last night

[1] I believe it was the 12th Engineers from St. Louis.

while we were eating our dinner, we heard an awful crumbling sound at the side of our hut and then the wall began to give. We rushed outside, and darned if a tank wasn't trying to crawl over our shanty."

"I wonder what the inside of a tank looks like," I said, after I had stopped laughing at his description.

"Come out and I'll show you," said the Captain.

So we went round to the back of the shack where two of them were standing.

"Did you know that there were male and female tanks?" he asked.

"I've heard of both kinds in civil life."

"They are much alike, except for the kind of guns they carry. A male tank has three-inch guns, the female tanks have machine-guns that can fire two hundred bullets a minute. I don't know why one is called 'he' and the other 'she,' except that the female animal can talk faster."

A close inspection showed the weightiness of the ugly, awkward, grey monster. The caterpillar tractors wound round the wheels, digging into the ground with heavy claws. Solid, studded steel en-

closed it, leaded glass for small windows at the front end. One could hardly imagine how such a cumbersome object could be controlled so well, that it could walk over huge shell-holes, wide trenches and barbed wire without the least sign of effort. The snubnose just dips down into a trench, the peculiarly curved body propelling it out again and over the top.

One enters the tank through a small, greasy opening in the side which can be closed by a steel door. Inside is an enormous mass of machinery —guns, ammunition, gears, levers, pulleys, steering wheels, tools and engine. The racket inside must be deafening. It is impossible to stand upright. There are enough small iron seats for the tankmen to sit and do their work.

When we got out again, rather greasy and mud-stained, I asked the Captain where the 11th battalion was—a New York organization.

"See those shell-holes over there?" he replied. "Well, the battalion moved out of here two days ago. That's the ground where they had their tents. If they had remained a day longer, there wouldn't be a man of them alive. The Huns shelled this

place the night after they left. We are going to build some dug-outs into yonder hill tomorrow. It isn't safe out in the open."

The Engineer battalions had done some good fighting up this way. One morning when they were bringing up rations they saw the Germans coming on in a huge wave. They jumped off their trains, grabbed what rifles they could and fought by the side of the British Tommy. A few of them were in an important village, Marcoing, captured by the British and retaken by the Germans a few days later. I had heard that the Huns didn't intend to take any American prisoners and this was proved to me when a wounded British officer was brought into my operating hut at the dressing station.

"Your fellows put up a great fight and I have to thank two of them for being here now," he said. "I was wounded, and when the Germans came in and took the village they stayed by me. The Germans made me a prisoner, but when they saw my two comrades they raised their rifles and fired point blank. It was awful. A few hours later our men re-attacked and got the village again,

and then I was sent down here. I'll never forget those fellows as long as I live. They didn't have the chance of a snow ball in hell!"

On my way back to the dressing station, I passed a "cinema" theatre on the main road. There was a large sign in front advertising the show for that evening. Thus are life and death linked closely together at the front.

Things were quiet in the operating room that day, so after lunch I sought out Jimmie, my batman, and inquired as to the possibilities for a bath.

You must remember that I had been out at the front for nearly four weeks, and although I had longed for a good, clean bath it was out of the question. For two weeks at a time I didn't have my clothes off. I'd get as far as taking off my shoes and coat, but in order to make up for the loss in warmth I'd put on a pair of bed socks, a knitted helmet and wrap a blanket over my shoulders. It was too cold to do more than think of a bath. At first I felt so itchy all over and scratched so hard, that I was sure the cooties had got me. Once I took off my shirt and looked but

there were none. As the cooties inhabit the seams of your shirt and only come out to bite you and go back again, you don't have to go further to look for trouble. I once remarked that I couldn't see how a man could go without taking a bath at least once a week, but now I can understand how a Frenchman can go for a year without one. It's all a matter of habit and the people you live with. Once I thought that I couldn't get along without napkins, clean towels, scented soap, clean water to wash in, my morning coffee and all that. But that is all changed now.

The thing that gave me the idea about a bath, other than the thought of my duty towards myself, was seeing a tin tub in the ward; so, as I say, I got hold of Jimmie.

"Jimmie," I said, "something tells me I need a bath. Do you think you could fix it?"

"Be you wanting it now, sir?" he asked.

"Well, I could wait a few hours longer, considering I haven't had one in a month."

"Hot or cold, sir?" Jimmie inquired.

"Now, Jimmie," I said. "What would you say on a nice hot day like this with the thermometer

thirty-two degrees below zero? If you can manage hot water, I'll be thankful."

"Yaz, sir," he said. "And where will ye 'ave the bath? I mean, sir, will ye 'ave it in the cubby-hole alongside the ward or where?"

"The wisest plan, I think, Jimmie," I replied, weighing my words carefully, "would be to wait until the operating room is free at four o'clock. You could set the tub next to the fire and find a few screens to put round it to shut out the draught."

"I'll 'ave it ready, sir. Four o'clock, sir."

Jimmie, my batman, was my best friend. He had been given me shortly after I joined the ambulance. He was a short, stocky little Irishman with merry, twinkling blue eyes and a hidden smile which jumped out at you unawares. I thought that he had wonderful teeth until he came to me one day complaining of a toothache, and when I asked him to show the offending member he deposited his masticators in a handkerchief and showed me the only real tooth in his mouth. He didn't smoke, drink or swear and went to church on Sundays. But, like all good batmen, he knew

how to steal honestly for his master. In a short time I had a little dressing table that I had never bought and innumerable little things like enamelled basins and cups, shoe polish, handkerchiefs and so on. My chief delight was to get Jimmie talking. He was somewhat of a philosopher and certainly had kissed the Blarney stone. Whenever I wanted to be sure of anything, I'd ask Jimmie. He had made himself complete master of all my property and of myself.

On a morning shortly after he was given to me, Jimmie saw me looking over my kit. He saluted me smartly.

"If ye don't mind, sir, I'll do the lookin' after your property. All I wants to do is to take out everything you've got and look at it. Then I knows it's yours and I can catch the —— —— who tries to swipe 'em. You don't need to know what you've got any more. When you wants a thing just yell for Jimmie. I see you ain't got a few things like a tin cup and basin. I must make it my duty to get them."

After that I never looked at my kit again. The only thing Jimmie would let me take care of my-

self was my money. I couldn't even get a new package of tobacco without asking him!—and cigarettes? The more I smoked, the more I had.

Our work in the operating room stopped at the usual hour, and Jimmie got busy. First, he brought in the tin tub, which was about three feet long and one foot wide. He set this near the coal stove, on which he had a bucket of water boiling. He had five other buckets going on other stoves in adjoining huts. He brought in two wooden horses which he placed near the fire and upon these he carefully deposited my clean underclothing, socks, flannel shirt, clean handkerchief and towels. Behind the stove he put my "gum" boots. Then he placed two operating room screens between the draughty window and the tub and closed the door.

The room was nice and warm. He had brought in the six pails of hot water and now he began pouring the water into the tub until it was three-quarters full.

"All ready, sir," he said.

I undressed first from the waist down and stepped into the water. How grateful, how sooth-

ing it felt! The warmth in my feet began to creep up through my body, and finally I ventured to take off the rest of my clothes. As I drew my olive-drab, flannel shirt over my head, my family flew out of my pocket and fell into the tub. Thus my wife and child felt the soothing effects of the tub too. I rescued them before the water could get through the leather cover of the photograph case.

Somehow, every one must have known that I was taking a bath in the operating room. The tub wasn't large enough to accommodate more than my feet, and, thus as I posed there like September Morn, not more than twenty people came into the room. For minutes at a time I had to "stand to" to hide my modesty.

With the help of Jimmie I got a good scrubbing. When I had finished all the parts that I could reach, I gave him the soap and sponge, and he worked on my back.

By this time my towel was steamed through and my clean clothes piping hot. Jimmie stood by, handing me one warm piece after the other, and finally helped me on with my boots.

Never was there another like Jimmie.

CHAPTER IX

OUR move orders to go back to Moislans arrived about four o'clock one afternoon, and so we hastily packed our kits and got our men together. Morgan had become permanently detached and now was made a battalion M. O. He was quartered in a village a short distance away, where he was amusing himself dodging bombs dropped from German aeroplanes.

We were to rejoin our ambulance and then move back for a real, well-earned rest. The men of our division had been in the trenches day and night for over three weeks, fighting all the time in the worst kind of weather imaginable. The nights were bitter cold: the sun seldom came out during the day. When one considers that five days hand-running in the trenches is about all the average man can stand without a rest, you can appreciate how hard put to it the men were.

As some empty ambulances were going our way,

we decided to wait until five o'clock and ride. But at the last moment they had to be used for patients, so we formed our men in line, and with Crosbie and I at the head the little band marched the eight miles. It was pitch dark, cold and raining. No lights were allowed on the over-crowded road. It is a wonder we weren't run into by one of the hundred ammunition lorries or ambulances that passed by us.

We had to go over the same road we had taken ten days before. But it was a different proposition, walking in the blackness of the night. We had great difficulty finding the crossing at which we were to turn off. All the shell-holes which had been fairly dry when we had passed them before were filled knee-deep with water and mud, and, of course, it was impossible to keep out of them. I had my flash-lamp with me, but it wasn't long before it petered out, so that our little band floundered in the mud until we were covered from the waist down. I had high, leather, waterproof boots on, but the water came in over the tops of them, and the men's ankle boots were soaked through. At first the men started singing to pass the time pleasantly,

but it wasn't very long before they were cussing, except when a man fell flat in a shell-hole and almost drowned. That was too good a joke not to laugh.

When we got to the Ambulance we looked like a lot of drowned rats. Not a sign of habitation could be seen, not a light anywhere. The men had "struck" their tents and had rigged up dwelling places in any old tumbledown yard where they could find enough bricks and iron for covering. The C. O. had moved over to a one-room palace, made of four walls that had been part of a pretentious château. The ceiling was also intact, and the openings of the windows and doors were covered with blankets. The reason he had selected it was because it had a passable fireplace. The men could get plenty of wood for fuel from the destroyed houses around.

We entered the warm room. One man, who had just returned from leave, happy "Emmy" and the Q.-M. were there. They were just about to sit down to dinner.

"This is great," I said. "First time I've been warm in a week. Where do we sleep?"

"Right on this cozy little floor," answered Emerson. "This village is short on hotels, and those that are here are all booked up. So we opened this one and called it the 'Palais de Luxe.' Unfortunately it only has one room, but in that you can eat, sleep and be merry. Three of us have slept here so far, but I guess we can make room for two more. We'll fold the table up and stand it in the corner. Then we will draw lots to see who will sleep next to the fire."

"That's all right, Emmy," laughed Crosbie. "But please don't dream you're my missus in the middle of the night and try to crawl into my bed."

After dinner some one suggested bridge, so we cleared the table and laid the dishes on the floor. Each of us procured a candle from his haversack, took the lid off his tin cigarette box for a candle holder and placed it at his corner of the table. We borrowed a deck of cards from the cook. These cards had once been new, but constant use by the cook in numerous games of Patience had frayed the edges and deepened the pinkish tints of the hearts and diamonds. We played for fifty centimes a hundred, and as Emmy had informed

me that every time I doubled him he would redouble we had an exciting, hilarious game. The walls shook with our laughter. When we finished well after midnight, I had won at least ten centimes.

Our batmen had brought in our bedding rolls. We laid them out on the floor, side by side, and in a few minutes after the game was over every man was sliding into his blankets. But it was some time before we quieted down enough to go to sleep.

On the following morning our definite orders to entrain for the Rest Area came. So we made our first move to Etricourt, a village a short distance away, where we were to remain until the train was ready to take us farther. It was bitter cold, and so you can imagine our dismay when we got there to find that we were assigned to a row of dirty, soggy tents, located in a muddy field, pocked with shell-holes. One couldn't walk ten feet without getting caught in barbed wire or stumbling into a hole, and to add to our discomfort the troops who had previously been there had used the larger shell-holes for garbage and refuse of all kinds, which they neglected to cover up.

I sent for Jimmie.

"Jimmie," I said, "pick out the warmest tent you can—one with a flat piece of ground if possible. If I don't freeze to death before you get my bedding roll open, I'll come in when you are ready for me and go to bed."

"Yaz, sir."

And then I went down to inspect the officers' mess. It consisted of another tent which was icy cold. We couldn't have a fire in a tent and the men couldn't build any outside, not even for cooking, because it was nearly dark and a fire made too good a target for aeroplanes.

I managed to get some tea and bread, and then informed my fellow officers that I was going to bed. It was a little after four in the afternoon.

"Aren't you going to have any dinner?" asked Parnell.

"What for? I can't walk round in this pesky place for three hours. There isn't any place to sit down without freezing to death, and so I am going to climb into my blankets and stay there until we move."

They all laughed.

Jimmie had found a fairly decent tent, had procured a "biscuit," on which he laid out my bedding roll. From some place or other he had resurrected two large tin boxes, one of which he placed on top of the other, and on these he put two lighted candles. I slipped off my shoes and climbed into my blankets, which Jimmie had pinned together with large safety-pins. I had four plies of blankets under me and six above me. Then I donned my arctic garb—knitted helmet, Irish shawl, muffler and a pair of woollen gloves. My, how nice and warm it felt.

I picked up Louis Vance's book "The Black Bag," which was published some years ago but was still exciting enough to keep me awake. Somewhere in my wanderings it got into my kit. My hands, as they held the book, would become icy cold, but I developed the system of managing the book (it was a small volume) with one hand so that I could keep the other under the covers for a time.

Every one of the officers came in to laugh at me and call me Peary, but I noticed a wistful look in

their eyes. Jimmie came in innumerable times to see if I were comfortable.

Along towards eight o'clock I heard some one opening the flap of my tent and Jimmie stepped in, head and shoulders first. In one hand he carried a tin can, in the other was a soup plate, and from the top of his puttee protruded a large spoon.

"What you got, Jimmie?"

"The officers sent for me, sir, and told me to feed you this." And with that he poured hot pea soup from the can into the plate and pulled the spoon out of his puttee.

Do you wonder that I was overwhelmed by the kindness of these men? I was too cold and lazy to get up for dinner. They were freezing down in a tent but they wouldn't forget me.

Every one turned in early. As the men's tents were next to ours, we were kept awake for some time by their singing to the accompaniment of an old accordion. Those men will sing anywhere. They are made that way. I was complaining of the cold in between ten folds of blankets, while they had only one blanket apiece which they had

to roll themselves in after covering the earth with their ground sheets.

Just as I was dozing off at about ten o'clock, Jimmie came in. He looked me over carefully.

"I thought perhaps ye might need me in the night, sir, so I takes the tent next to you. If you needs me, just you yell, 'Jimmie.' I don't think yer quite warm enough."

So Jimmie tucks the corners round me more closely, ties up my bedding roll over them and finally takes my Canadian mackinaw down from a nail in the tent-pole and tucks it round my feet.

Crosbie roomed with me, but he wasn't very comfortable, because he had loaned some of his blankets. He tried to sit up long enough to write a letter to his wife, but his fingers froze over the pen.

All night long we were disturbed. Orders and contrary orders, telling us when to move and when not to move, kept coming in until six o'clock in the morning, when the Q.-M. jumped in on us to tell us he was going to pack his wagons and had to have the stretchers. Considering that we didn't move

for seven hours, he might have let us sleep a little longer.

Crosbie was to take the transport by road, while the other officers and men were to entrain.

At two in the afternoon we moved away from that frozen mud hole and marched to the railroad siding, where there was a line of compact, little cattle cars about four hundred yards long waiting for us. The dismal sky had frozen so that by the time we arrived there we were covered by a fine film of snow. I looked round for a *de luxe* compartment for officers, but the train-master forgot to put it on. So after seeing our men comfortably piled on the floor of three of the cars, we jumped on to a fourth where we found a dozen other companions in misery.

First, I must explain the art of getting into a box car. If you are a horse or a mule or a cow, some one borrows a plank and you walk up majestically. But if you have two feet, there is no one to help you at all. You first look round until you find a small projection of iron in which you may place one foot, then you get hold of the floor with your two hands and raise yourself

enough so that you can crawl in on your stomach. In the process you swallow some dust and your clothes look as though you had come out of a coal bin.

This particular car must have been used for its proper purpose at one time. It certainly was not fit for human occupation. The floor was covered with an inch of dust, manure, sawdust, straw, hay, horse hair, and ruined bits of bread. We didn't like the looks of it, so we began house cleaning. One of the officers got on one side and I got over on the other, and thus we swept all the dirt towards the centre with bits of newspaper. The next problem was to get the dirt out of the car—we blew it out, and kicked it out.

After a moderate wait, the train began to stretch and finally worked itself along the track. The dozen or so of officers cozily deposited themselves on the floor, after some of them had managed to close the two sliding doors. While the daylight lasted we were fairly comfortable, and a young subaltern with microscopical down on his upper lip actually told stories that made us laugh.

But darkness came on early, and with it the

storm increased in intensity until the miserable, cold wind blew in enough snow to cover the floor of the car. After a time, some one suggested that we close the window openings, and so we rode on in utter darkness.

The mess servants of the Ambulance had packed up some sandwiches for us, so that when tea time came round we felt pretty good about it. But what is the good of six sandwiches when there are twelve men aboard, and the other men hadn't had foresight enough to provide for themselves? When we had emptied our packages and divided all our sandwiches in half, we were hungrier than ever.

I thought that I had experienced cold weather before and couldn't feel colder. But that ride was the opposite of Hades. The cold ate into your wet boots, froze your socks, got inside your underclothes, crawled down your neck and made the water run out of your nose. You would sit on the floor as long as your sitting arrangement would allow it and then stand up, first on one foot and then on the other, pawing the floor like a regular horse. We smoked innumerable cigarettes and pipes, but that didn't do us any good. We blew

our hands, but that didn't warm us any either. Some one tried to sing, but his voice cracked like an icicle. After a few hours some of the men began tramping up and down, and in order not to have their toes kicked the others joined in, and finally we formed a prisoners' file, one behind the other, with our hands on one another's shoulders and tramped up and down and down and up until we got our circulation going.

We made the sixteen miles in eight hours.

When we opened the doors at our detraining point, we found that a real blizzard had set in. We jumped out in a foot of snow, formed our men into companies and marched four miles to a village, which was so small that a map wouldn't recognize it. Glorious news awaited us. The transport was somewhere on the way, we were told, and all our motor ambulances were snowed up on the roads. We had relied on these ambulances to bring our food and our luggage. As we hugged the miniature mess fire, we decided of all the miseries of war nothing could beat the hardships of going back to the rest areas. I wondered if we were ever going to get any rest.

Emerson saved my life that night. How he ever got his bedding roll, I don't know. He gave me a wink to follow him out into the hall.

"Get hold of one end of this," he whispered, as he pointed to a canvas heap on the floor. "Don't say a word to any one."

We carried "it" over to our billet, where there was a big bed. Inside were most of his blankets, which we made use of in short order.

CHAPTER X

WHEN we got up the following morning we found the world blanketed in snow. The storm had abated somewhat, but there was still enough wind to carry whirling eddies of fine white filaments, so that in a short time the roadway was so steeply banked that one could walk through it only with the greatest difficulty. One of our ambulances had managed to crawl in during the night, but all the rest of them, motor and horse transport, were stranded along the road. Troops came floundering into the village, heavily bent by their snow-covered packs. Their officers, many of whom had been up all night, were anxiously making inquiries. They knew where they were to go, but didn't know how to get there, because most of the passable roads marked on their maps were completely blocked. Some of the battalions didn't find their headquarters for days, and often one would see a long line of marching men cutting across the fields where the walking was a trifle

better, their officers in front, feeling their way along with their compasses.

Our Ambulance began its move early in the afternoon for Beaudricourt, a town but a few miles away. Ordinarily one would have gotten there in two hours. But, as I said, the good roads were impassable; so we had to crawl up the side of a mountain along a by-path covered with slippery ice. At times, for hundreds of yards, the drifts were so high that the lower parts of the men's bodies couldn't be seen, and one would emerge from the struggle with the snow, sweating and exhausted. To add to our troubles we lost our way, and so more than five hours had passed before we arrived at our destination—cold, hungry, tired and dirty.

No cheerful welcome awaited us. Christie had gone ahead to do the billeting. He had done the best he could. But there was only one barn available for the men, and only one billet available for the officers—a billet that had to be used as a mess and for sleeping quarters. The few civilians in the village were rationed, and so had no coal or wood to give or sell us. There was a small stove

in our room, and by dint of a great deal of persuasion in very poor French we prevailed on the landlady to start a fire, which she kept going by putting in one piece of coal at a time.

We sat down in our cheerless room to discuss the situation. Not a man had more than one blanket, and the officers had none. The only kit we had was that in our small haversacks which we carried with us—shaving and toilet articles, a towel and possibly some tobacco. Moreover, our food had almost given out. We had enough on hand for the night's meal—biscuits, tea, bully-beef and cheese—but when that was gone there wasn't a possibility of getting any more until our wagons turned up. There was no use trying to get anything to eat from the people of the village. They themselves didn't look any too robust.

I went out to see how the men were getting on. The long, uneven street of the village, covered with snow, led to the corner where the draughty, straw-thatched barn stood. Inside, in the dim light afforded by two or three candles, I could see the shadowy outlines of our men, closely huddled together between tiers of wire beds, trying to keep

themselves warm over two hastily improvised braziers from which the smoke was thickly pouring.

I wondered where they got the fuel. I afterward found out that they had ripped off the door of a tumble down house and cut it up for firewood. Of course there was an official complaint. Although the men swore they knew nothing about it, the Government had to pay.

One could see that, beside being cold, the men were hungry. But do you suppose such trifles could dampen their spirits? Later in the evening, when I had occasion to pass their billet again, I could hear them singing:

Take me back to dear old Blighty:
Put me on the train for dear old London town:
Take me over there, drop me anywhere,
Liverpool, Leeds or Manchester—where I don't care.
I should like to see my best girl;
Cuddling up again we soon shall be.
Whoa! Hi—te—tiddley highty,
Hurry me off to Blighty,
Blighty is the place for me.

When I returned to the mess, the officers were discussing our sleeping accommodations. Besides

the table, there was a double bed in the room on which were two mattresses, a heavy comfortable, a thin woollen blanket, and a light counterpane. There were also three canvas cots. Off to the side was a smaller room with a bed in it and enough covers for the C. O., provided he was willing to sleep in his clothes and use his overcoat.

"We were just talking over the comforts of our mansion, Hays," laughed Emerson. "Excluding the C. O., there are five of us. We have one bed, three cots (the legs are broken on one of them but that doesn't make any difference), and a few odds and ends, of course. We haven't decided how to divide them."

"I'll tell you what we'll do, Emmy, provided the others are satisfied," I said. "We'll move two of the cots together and give Glanville and Christie the comfortable and Parnell can use the other cot, the one with the crooked leg. We'll give him the blanket and counterpane. You and I will use the bed."

"All very fine," he answered. "I suppose you want us to use our shoes to cover ourselves with."

"Not at all," I replied. "I have observed that the bed has two mattresses. We'll sleep on one and use the other for a cover."

That appealed to his sense of humour. We all crawled in as I suggested. Each man wore his overcoat and muffled his face up in a knitted scarf, if he had one.

Emmy and I rolled back the upper mattress and when we had laid ourselves flat, let it roll over on top of us. It was good and heavy but warm —better than a half dozen blankets. The only trouble was that whenever Emmy or I wanted to turn over we'd both have to wake up, roll the mattress halfway and then let it come back again. The discomfort of sleeping between two mattresses may be imagined when I tell you that we slept for ten solid hours.

Late the next morning Christie came in with the glad news that he had found new billets for us, "the finest you ever saw at the front," and, to make us happier still, our ration wagon, which we hadn't seen for over twenty-four hours, turned up with a goodly supply of food, at least sufficient to last us for two days.

I went round later in the day to investigate the new billets that had been picked out for us. We were to keep the original one for a mess. One was located in the attic of the Mayor's house! Parnell and the C. O. were in a fairly decent mansion and clean too. I couldn't find No. 13, so I had to inquire of one of the Mlles., who offered to show it to me. I was conducted through a back door into a stable, in which were two horses and plenty of manure. We waded through it and came to a room in which was a small iron bed, a room which probably was once used by a horse or cow. Then I went down to my billet at No. 5. Here I found a gorgeous room facing the street, with curtains at the two windows, a fine coal stove, a writing table and a large bed with inviting covers upon it.

The tears came to my eyes when I thought of Christie. "Just like him," I said to myself. "That blessed fool goes to work and takes No. 13, the very worst room, and gives me the best."

But that's the way it was with those men—always the best for me, always the worst for themselves. It wasn't only what they did—it was the

way they did it, with no ceremony, no ostentation, just as if it were a matter of course that their guest from America should have the best of everything. Do you wonder that I loved them?

If men are left in a place long enough, they will manage to make themselves comfortable. Inside of three days the village was transformed. The men had tidied up and repaired their barn, the cooks had found a suitable cook-house, the sergeants had found a decent place for themselves where they could hold aloof from their men in dignified disdain, the officers managed to get enough of their kits to make life bearable. Moreover, we heard of a Canadian saw-mill a few kilometres away, so one afternoon I was given a detail, marched over there and loaded up with all the refuse lumber we could carry. This meant comfort for the men as well as for ourselves.

As I have mentioned, I had a stove in my billet, but at first I had no fuel to burn in it. So I got hold of my ever-ready Jimmie.

"Jimmie," I said, "there is a stove, and I am cold. What would you do if you had a stove and were cold?"

Jimmie smiled.

"Maybe the old lady has some wood," I continued. "But I can't parley with her. Do you think that you could parley with her enough to get a franc's worth of *bois?*"

"Shure!" he answered.

So I accompanied Jimmie out to the kitchen and silently listened.

"Bon jour, madame," he said, "s'il vous plait beaucoup bois" (he pointed to a piece of wood) "l'officier" (he pointed to me) "il acheté la bois" (he opened his paw and showed her a franc). "J'acheté une franc's worth."

She caught on, called her little boy, and explained to him in gestures and a jumble of meaningless words. He went to the woodshed and returned with two long pieces of timber, which Jimmie proceeded to hack with a half-handled hatchet.

We were destined to stay in this village for a good many days. They were really and truly happy days, after we once got settled. I had been assigned to the care of all the sick, whom we took care of in two large bare rooms, upon the floors

of which we could lay stretchers. In peace time we would have considered it impossible to care for patients properly with such poor accommodation. But the poor Tommy was glad to get a bit of rest anywhere, particularly when he knew that he could get plenty of blankets. We didn't have many kinds of medicine. Aspirin or salicylic acid did for rheumatics. No. 9 or No. 13 pill did for the digestive tract, and castor oil was ladled out by the quart every morning. Many of the men had sore or blistered feet. These we treated with hot fomentations of borated gauze.

We not only had to treat soldiers but civilians as well. One night I was called in to see an old woman who was supposed to be suffering from heart disease. The sergeant took me through the stables and out to a decayed shack. The stench in the one room was awful. The floor, table, bed, everything was filthy. The old woman lay over in one corner on a bed covered with rags. I never saw such a filthy human being. She was a brownish, yellow green. Her grey white hair was matted with dirt. She looked a hundred years old. I hated to go near her, but I at last

got up courage enough to feel her pulse. Then I went outside with the sergeant.

"Think she's got cardiac failure," I said. "Get a hypo ready with some digitalis and bring it over to my billet. And, Sergeant—you needn't mind sterilizing it."

A short time after he brought the medicine and syringe over to me, and on second thought I decided to sterilize it anyway. Then we went to see the old woman again.

The sergeant bared her arm, poured out some iodine on a piece of gauze and applied it. But even when I held the candle close to the arm, I couldn't find the place where he had put it on. It was just the colour of her skin.

I picked up the flabby skin, held my hypo. firmly, gave a jab; the old woman gave a yell that raised the roof, broke my needle before it got through the skin, jumped out of bed—and was cured of her heart disease.

It was the day before Christmas when I thought of what I could give Jimmie. We had been making preparations for the holiday for a week, for we wanted the men to have as good a time as was

possible. We had bought two pigs, weighing over two hundred pounds apiece, which I had the privilege of seeing "stuck." It's a most abominable sight, but when the carcass is hung up, all shiny and clean, one forgets that it ever was an animal with piggish sensibilities. The British Government were to supply plum pudding, and the officers had bought cigarettes, tobacco and chocolate for the men. We had purchased an eighteen-pound turkey for ourselves and had managed to find a good many of the trimmings.

As we were near Doulons, a fair-sized town, I asked the C. O.'s permission to jump on one of the ambulances that was going to a C. C. S. located there. I also asked if I could take Jimmie along.

"It's not customary for the men to ride into town, Hays," he said.

"I know that," I replied. "But I want to deck Jimmie out for Christmas and I want to take him along so he can select the things for himself."

"All right this time,"—he laughed.

So Jimmie went with me, wondering all the way how he happened to be taken on a joy ride.

I decked Jimmie out with good warm gloves,

heavy woollen socks and other things, until his eyes almost popped out of his head. I spent twice as much as I usually gave him for salary in a month.

"Gee, Captain, that's great. Thank ye." That's all he said, but I knew Jimmie was mine, heart and soul, for the rest of my life.

He came back with me, a happy boy. And I am sure he bragged all night to his less fortunate companions.

The next morning Jimmie came in with my shaving water.

"Merry Christmas to ye, Captain," he said.

"Merry Christmas, Jimmie," I answered, as I got out my shaving things. "Nice bright morning, isn't it?"

I noticed that Jimmie looked embarrassed as he stepped uneasily from one foot to the other, and I also noticed that he held one hand behind his back.

"Would ye be so kind, sir," he said after a pause, "as to accept a present from me?" And his hand flew out. In it was a beautiful bevelled-glass mirror, one that magnified on one side.

I was overwhelmed and hated to take it, but I wouldn't have hurt the poor fellow's feelings for

the world. Where he got the mirror from I don't know, but I'll bet it was one of his prize possessions.

I was afraid of Christmas Day, afraid that I would remember too well the happy home holidays, afraid that I would be so lonesome, that I would be a nuisance to every one around me. But somehow the surroundings were so different, there was so little of the holiday spirit, that I wouldn't have known it was Christmas if I hadn't been stopped by the men who wished me a happy day.

We had hoped to give the boys a cheery dinner. But the only room we could find to serve the dinner in was the one room of the schoolhouse which would only hold sixty at a time, so they had to eat in three shifts. It started to snow early in the afternoon and, as the kitchens were some distance away and the food had to be transported in open pails, it was cold before it got to the men. The great thing that distinguished the dinner from all others was that the men had plates, knives and forks. The pale French beer helped to lighten them up some, and although the dinner was not the success we should have liked it to have been, it was

so out of the ordinary that the men made a good time out of it until—

An orderly came up to the C. O., who was standing round watching the men. He handed him a note. I could tell by his face that it contained bad news.

"Have to move, Hays," he said to me in an undertone. "Orders to go back farther. The transport must leave before daylight. We and the men can wait until the following morning."

"Going to break up the fun, I'm afraid," he added. "Have to call some of the men out to pack up the wagons. Puts the kibosh on our dinner, too."

So, instead of sitting down in comfort to our fine dinner to which we had looked forward so much, we swallowed it as quickly as possible, got on our heavy coats and went out on the road to superintend the loading of the wagons.

I had done so much walking that my feet were sore. So the next day the C. O. informed me that I was to take charge of the transport that remained —two horse ambulances, two G. S. wagons and a limber, and the twelve horses and mules. He and

the men were to start off at six in the morning and march to the entraining point, while I was to come on later with the transport, riding on one of the ambulances. My transport was to entrain too, but some time later in the day. He pointed out a short cut on the map to me. The job looked easy and so I was glad to tackle it, although I had little previous experience with wagons or horses.

Jimmie awakened me at four A. M. and I helped to see the men off at six. Then I made an inspection of all the billets, saw that they were thoroughly clean, that no refuse was lying about anywhere, and that the garbage had been properly burned. I interviewed the mayor, presented him with the billeting certificates, had them properly signed. At nine o'clock I had the transport lined up, with the two ambulances laden with sitting patients leading the way. As I was told that the train didn't leave until twelve o'clock, I knew we could travel the ten kilometres we had marked out on the map with perfect ease.

At the start our first mishap occurred. The two balky mules in pulling a limber around a corner ditched it. Pull as they would, they couldn't get

it out. So we had to take off all the load, unhitch the mules, and pull the limber out by hand. For a kilometre or so after that everything was smooth sailing, but then the roads became more and more slippery, and when we came to a long hill the mules just sat down on their tails and said, "No, No!" After a great deal of urging with a whip we got them going, and they kept on well until we came to a level road which was covered with a glaze of ice. One of the mules insisted that the travelling was better in the near-by field, but his partner didn't agree with him. The result was that the driver couldn't keep the wagon on the road, and when the offside mule sat down again I almost gave up in despair. Now it happened that I had in my care a blind horse, which we kept in the Ambulance for sentimental reasons, and as he was just trailing along I decided to make use of him. So I ordered the mule unhitched and the blind horse put in his place. He and the other mule made a sorry pair.

We covered two-thirds of our contemplated journey in less than no time. I knew where I was to turn off. But when I got there an M. P. in-

sisted that the road was so bad that no transport could get through and pointed to another road down which all the troops had gone early in the morning.

We tramped and tramped and tramped. I had been detailed to the transport so that I could ride, but I was so sorry for the horses that I didn't have the heart to add to their burden.

Twelve o'clock came and went, and still I couldn't see the railroad siding. I stopped an N. C. O. who was passing.

"Can you tell me how far we are from Mondicourt?" I asked.

"I think, sir, it ain't more than ten kilometres," he replied. "You goes down this road and then turns to the left. You see that big hill? You goes up there if you can. It's about a mile and a half long and I don't think you can make it in one day. Some of the transport which came through last night ain't more than halfway up yet."

I could hardly believe him, but a near-by signpost informed me that I was farther away than when I started.

Fortunately I found one of the other ambulance companies of our division stationed here and, after explaining my difficulties to an officer, I arranged with him to borrow a pair of horses and some traces. I then got hold of my sergeant.

"Sergeant," I said, "we were due at the station at twelve o'clock, and it is now twelve-thirty. If possible we are going to get there some time today. Take the transport down to the first turn and then trace each wagon separately. I'll go ahead, jump on the first lorry and see if I can't hold up the train."

So after a few moments I jumped on a passing lorry and got to the entraining point in less than no time. Here everything was bustle and confusion. A long line of cars stood on the tracks, hundreds of men were running round, horses were being driven into cars, wagons were rolled on to flat cars. I sought out the R. T. O. and told him my troubles.

"Well, it isn't as bad as it might be," he said. "This is the ten o'clock train. If you get here by four o'clock, I guess it will be time enough."

I found one of our ambulances waiting there,

so I ordered the driver to take me back to my men. On the way I worked out a plan. I decided to pile all the sick into the motor ambulance, give them enough rations and send them on with a note to the C. O. Then, if necessary, I'd stay at the station overnight and come on the next day.

When I got to the top of the hill, I found that one of the wagons had already been traced up. Four more remained. I separated the sick and sent them on, and then watched the poor, sweating animals get the other wagons up. It took a full two hours. By that time the motor ambulance had come back for me and so again I raced to the station.

By four o'clock three of my wagons had appeared and they were immmediately put on the cars. Spaces remained for the other two.

"All ready to start," called the R. T. O., as he came toward me.

"I—I think my wagons are coming, sir," I said anxiously. "I'll just go out to the road to see." In a moment, I was back again.

"I see them in the distance, sir. If you could only hold the train for a few moments." Of course

I hadn't seen them, but I had to bluff it. I hadn't fallen down on the job yet and I didn't want to fall down on this one.

"I'll give you eight minutes more. The train moves at 4.08."

Glory be! At 4.07 the two wagons showed dimly in the distance, and at 4.08 exactly they drew up before the empty trucks. The drivers hastily unhitched their horses, ran with them to their proper places, while a half hundred men got at the wheels and shoved the wagons on to the cars.

I rushed to a seat in my third-class compartment and sat down. I was thoroughly exhausted.

That train went off on schedule time. It was supposed to move at twelve noon, but it actually got into action at 5.28 P. M.

I shall not enter into details of the journey. It was a fairly comfortable one. I consumed a can of bully-beef and some biscuits, took off my heavy wet boots and wrapped my feet in a light blanket I carried and went to sleep.

We got to our destination near Corbie shortly after midnight. As far as I can recollect, the dis-

tance as the crow flies was at least twenty miles. But in order to get there we had to travel back towards the front about forty miles to find the right track.

I was dead to the world, and therefore was overjoyed to find faithful Christie awaiting me with an ambulance. I left him to attend to the wagons (which I found out afterwards took about three hours to unload), jumped on the car with Jimmie and rode two miles through the frosty night to the farmhouse allotted to us. I was assigned a room with Crosbie, whom I found comfortably snoring in the only bed. Jimmie placed my bedding roll on the floor, and soon I was inside my blankets hugging myself to keep warm. It was no use. So I crawled into the narrow bed with Crosbie and, hugging close to him for warmth, slept soundly till Jimmie came in in the morning with a cup of hot tea and some shaving water.

CHAPTER XI

FOR the first time since I had joined the Ambulance, we remained in one place long enough to establish and run a *bona fide* hospital. The farmhouse in which the officers were billeted, a low rambling affair with a large manured garden in front in which the chickens pecked all day, was about ten minutes' walk away. The hospital buildings, before our immense victory on the Somme, had been converted from a bicycle factory into a C. C. S. The rooms were large, bright and sunny, but were in sad need of repair. The glass in the windows was broken, the stone floors of the lower rooms were damp and the roof leaked in certain spots.

I was placed in charge of the hospital, so immediately I set to work fitting up rooms for stretcher cases, others for walking sick, one for a dispensary, one for a receiving room and so on. As there was no possibility of getting stoves, I made

some out of tin cracker boxes and oil drums. The cracker boxes were opened up and then rolled into the form of a pipe. We made holes in the tops of the oil drums, drove the bottom in a few inches, made an opening near the bottom for a draught, and another near the top to put the coal in. Two or three of these were set in each ward, with the pipe sticking out of a hole cut in the paper or oil silk covering the window.

For the first few days we were tied up by a snow-storm, but then the sun came out and glowed down warmingly so that we were able to be out of doors a great deal of the time.

Amid these pleasant surroundings we passed the last days of the old year and the first days of the new year. Our agreeable circle was given a jolt when orders came for dear old Crosbie to report to a convalescent depot at the base. I particularly would miss him for, although I was very fond of all the men, Crosbie and I had been placed in more intimate contact than any of the others.

I mentioned that, on the night of my arrival at La Neuville, I was so cold that I jumped in bed

with Crosbie. The next day when I went into my room for my pipe, I found that he had instructed his batman to put his bedding on the floor and arrange my blankets on the bed. He never said a word to me, and, of course, although I appreciated why he did it, I couldn't stand for that.

I went into the mess where he was reading.

"Well, you're a peach," I said. "What sort of a fellow do you think I am?"

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Why in thunder did you give me that bed? I'm mad as a hornet. When I crept in with you last night to keep warm, I didn't ask for the whole bed, only half, and I tried to keep to my side too. If I had known that you were going to do this, I'd have stayed where I was."

"Forget it, old man," he said laughingly. "I just love a little floor; sleep better there than in bed. Don't you worry about me." And after a pause he continued, "And anyway I promised my missus that I'd be a good boy, which implies that I wouldn't sleep with any one while I was in France."

"You dear old blockhead," I said, "I know how

you meant it and all that, but it's a mighty doubtful compliment. I offer to sleep with you and what do you do? Choose a hard old floor instead."

That night I heard him manœuvring around for a comfortable position. The moon, shining through the uncurtained window, hit him squarely in the face, and the cold, draughty wind came roaring through the cracks between the ill-fitting window and the sill. But his heart and soul were warm even if his body wasn't.

I managed to get him to use the bed for a few nights anyway for, as orderly officer, I had to sleep in the hospital, so that I could be near the men if I were needed.

When I heard I was to sleep down there, I called Jimmie to help me find a bedroom. There was none to be had. But Jimmie always was resourceful.

"I've found a nook for ye," he said, "providin' you be satisfied with it."

So he took me upstairs to the large ward on the second floor where I kept my throat and bronchitis patients. The forty or fifty men were lying in their clothes on stretchers ranged along the walls.

Each man had three blankets and his overcoat. Besides, the room was nicely heated by four of my improvised stoves. Over in one corner was a small cubicle, partitioned over by canvas which extended halfway to the ceiling. Jimmie took me in there. Near the window was a small wooden ledge, but otherwise the place was bare.

"I think this room will do nicely for ye, sir," Jimmie said. "I'll bring your bedding roll in and place it over in the corner on a biscuit all nice and cozy. I think I can get ye some straw, sir, for under the stretcher so the wind won't freeze your back. I think ye will keep nice and warm here, sir, for them patients cough a lot of hot air into the ward and maybe a little will get into here."

Of course I had to go wherever Jimmie said, and so that night, about nine-thirty, I tramped through the fields from the officers' mess and, tired and weary after a hard day's work, reached my bedroom.

I undressed—that is, took off my shoes—and tucked myself into the blankets. But there was no sleep for me that night, although, as Jimmie said, the place was warm enough. I might have

slept if it hadn't been for the non-curative effects of the medicine I had given my men. Most of them had bronchitis or tickling in the throat. No. 1 bed would begin to bark, No. 2 bed would make it a duet and shortly the chorus of forty male barks would join in. Not to be outdone, I began to cough too, and thus it kept up until the wee small hours of the morning when I fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. But then a new sound assailed my ears, the pounding of a hundred or more feet on the floor above, where the enlisted men slept. It started as a slow muffled tramp, but became louder and louder as more men joined in, until the ceiling shook. But could one blame the poor fellows who had lain on the floor all night with their feet freezing off them?

On the afternoon of the last day of the year, the Colonel, Parnell and I decided to see Crosbie off and have a New Year's Eve dinner at the renowned Josephine's in Amiens about twelve miles distant. We had been talking of Josephine's for many days and had made up our minds to have at least one meal there before we returned to the front. Besides, I needed a bath.

We packed Crosbie's luggage, including a dog, and ourselves into the ambulance. It was a clear, crisp day, and so we were able to enjoy the ride. There was nothing noteworthy about the scenery, but one was first impressed by the thousands of troops in this back area, and then by the number of German prisoners who were working along the roads, looking very contented in their grey-green uniforms and dark, ugly overcoats, on the back of which large red letters were seen.

The large manufacturing town of Amiens is probably today the most talked of town in the world.[1] The Germans had it once but evacuated it early and, strange to say, left it intact. It is full of gay life, numerous busy shops, large hotels, cinemas, cafés and so on. It is the most western of all the towns taken by the Germans, but the battle of the Marne placed it in the hands of the British, although it is still under the civilian control of the French whose people are there in thousands, thriving on the trade thrown their way by the British soldiers. It is most noted for its pastry and its cathedral which, "as every reader

[1] See Appendix. The Most Thought-of Town in the World.

of Ruskin knows, is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things ever made of stone. It is badly placed: it is hemmed about by a mass of bad architecture, but the thing itself is matchless." Here also is a huge railroad terminus, through which pass the great mass of the troops toward the front.

Every officer looks forward to the refreshing novelty of visiting this town, particularly of seeing a money-making, ill-shaped, unkempt Frenchwoman running a restaurant, which now is as famous as the town itself. Fortunately, early in the war, a wandering officer discovered that Madame served exceptionally good food, which she must secrete in the cellar, for there is no room for it elsewhere.

There was another temptation for me here, for I hadn't had a bath for so long that I began to look for "burly Jaspers" again. I had heard glowing accounts of "Les Bains" and therefore looked forward to a second Fleischman's—marble and tiled rooms, porcelain tubs, a large swimming pool and all the accessories.

We first went to the railroad terminus. Everything here was hurry and bustle—thousands of

troops bound for the front, hundreds of others going away on leave. There were French, English, Irish, Australian and American soldiers everywhere, and scattered among the white men were a few blacks and Indians dressed in khaki.

We helped Crosbie check his luggage. Everything went through all right except the dog. Somehow dogs are *napou* and no amount of persuasion could convince the railroad officials that a poor nice doggie was just as much a part of a man as the rest of his baggage. The poor cur was wished on us until he could find better masters.

I immediately went to look for the baths. After passing through various back alleys, I came to a dingy place marked "Les Bains," paid my one franc, thirty centimes, through a dwarfed window, was given a ticket and a piece of scented soap and told to wait my turn. I entered the corridor of the bath-house where I saw a conglomerate lot of officers with tickets in their hands waiting their turn. I could smell hot water. A thin vapour of steam hung around the walls. When the attendant called ninety-four, I followed her upstairs and entered a steaming room which was so vapour-

ized that I couldn't see what was in it for a moment. I soon located a galvanized iron tub which was rapidly filling with hot water, the added attraction to which was that the tub was large enough to hold all of me at one time. I spent a glorious half hour in laving myself with the scented soap and emerged, feeling as clean as though I had really been in the place I dreamed of. I put on the clean clothes I had brought with me in my haversack left a fifty-centime piece for Madame on the edge of the tub and went down to join the three officers who were waiting for me.

As it was too early for dinner, we went to Josephine's for tea and to reserve our tables for the evening. Again I had expected something palatial. Turning down a narrow street we came to a window with the word "Huitres" on it and entered a glass-panelled door. Inside everything was dingy and crowded. In the small, front anteroom all kinds of shell-fish were laid out on large, china platters —oysters and lobsters particularly. A wooden partition divided this from an inner cubbyhole on one side of which was a miniature stove. The mistress of the stove was a pert mademoiselle who

was dressed for the drawing-room, with dainty, dark blue, tight-fitting dress and high, black, ankle shoes. It is hard to imagine that all of Josephine's dinners are cooked on this one little stove. Just beyond the stove is a stairway leading to the rooms above—so close to it that you have to touch mademoiselle (affectionately, if you wish) in passing.

Upstairs all is quiet and clean—except Josephine and her waitresses, all of whom bustle about, chattering like magpies and using their hands vociferously in articulation. They apparently realize that it isn't necessary to dress up to attract customers. The lady of the house wore a loose, ill-fitting, flimsy yellow dress and the girls were mostly in gingham hand-me-downs. The food is the main thing, and Josephine goes in for food in capital letters.

We sat down to a well-ordered table, with the whitest of napery on it and an immense loaf of good French bread and fresh sweet butter. We were served with excellent tea, toast, cakes, etc. And before we left we put in a reservation for a table for dinner.

We spent the next two hours wandering about

the town. It had been raining hard and it was now dark, so we were unable to visit the Cathedral, which I was particularly anxious to see. So we went into the movies, first in the B. E. F. Canteen where Sidney Drew and his bountiful wife gave us an exhibition of humour such as was popular in America three years ago. Tired of this, we visited a French movie which I hoped would be a little *risqué*, but again America supplied us with the talent in an exhibition of the Wild West as it exists in the movie director's mind. The only difference over here is that the words are in French, so that you have to guess what is going on, just like the small boy does at home.

At seven-thirty we again sought Josephine's. When we got upstairs we found the rooms crowded with British officers, packed so closely together that we could hardly get through. All classes and ranks sat side by side, with Josephine flitting about from one table to another, volubly jesting with the men in French they didn't understand, vehemently berating her underlings for not serving the food faster. Our table, in one corner of a small room which was gratefully hot after the chill damp out-

side, was invitingly laid out. Potage, delicious sole, spring chicken, French fried potatoes and an omelette. Champagne, chilled to the right temperature, made our hearts beat as one. Everything was wonderfully cooked—everything was delicious and, as the wine loosened us up, a general spirit of *camaraderie* pervaded the room.

When you talk of Josephine's in the line, every one says, "Good food, but it costs like hell. Wish I had some." And Josephine says, "Those officers —we rob them? Yes. Before the war I have a café which no one looks at. I make no money. When war comes, I have a visit from a British officer. He likes my food and tells his friends. Ah, mon Dieu, since then I work hard. I work my legs off. I work my arms off talking to them. They *non comprend* my French but they have money, *n'est pas?* I charge them one franc, two franc, a hundred franc. They pay just the same. When I charge most, they come most. The war may be over tomorrow and then—no more rich British officers and maybe I go back to my little café again. Maybe I make enough money to buy an automobile and diamonds."

We left Josephine's and sought our ambulance at the station. Not a light was visible in the town except the electric torches of the *demimondes* who flash them in your face as they pass by to see if you are good enough to be enticed to their lairs. If you are once caught—well that's another story. All of us being married men, they had no attraction for us.

We had a glorious New Year's Eve. On the way to the ambulance Parnell said,

"Ain't this an awful war? Our loved ones at home, no doubt, are worrying themselves sick about us—poor, self-sacrificing men who are spending a dreary New Year's Eve in this cold, cruel, country, trying to keep warm in the camp-fire's soothing glow, trying to bear the awful hunger with a heart full of courage, trying to smile in the face of war's grim reality. I'll bet my missus is so full of tears she can't even swallow a glass of champagne. And we—?"

Not such a bad time, was it?

CHAPTER XII

NEW YEAR'S DAY passed quietly, and so unlike a holiday that no one noticed it. We had the usual "quota" of sick in hospital and were kept busy taking in new cases and evacuating old ones.

I suppose every one made a New Year's resolution. I quote from my diary of that date.

January 1st, 1918.—Father Time has turned over once more, and now we shall look forward with hope and longing to that real peace which has no ending. I have made my New Year's resolution —I shall add my mite to my country's strength, if necessary until death shall end it all—if in the end I can feel that my child and his children shall for ever be protected from this ungodly murder. No one is wavering—we are strong and we are cheerful, and every one looks forward with abiding faith to the wonders our army is going to accom-

plish. We Americans must live up to the reputation we have made; but I hate to think of the daily list of casualties in the morning papers—brave American youths who deserve a better fate than to give themselves to swine who do not know the meaning of civilization. I pity the Germans *after* the war.

Quite a number of German prisoners were employed by the farmers in our neighbourhood, and every day we could see a band of them marching into a near-by field. The farmers paid them a few pence a day. Most of them had a little money with which to buy luxuries. It made me heartsick when I looked at these strapping fellows who were given every consideration and then thought of the prison camp for the English prisoners at Ruhleben and in other German towns where the men not only suffer from hunger but from inhuman treatment of all kinds.[1] They were rationed the same as our men, were given the same kind of billets, were allowed to wear warm clothes, had a canteen in which were sold various things such as

[1] See Appendix. Hun Red Cross Fiends.
See Appendix. A Soldier's Narrative.

crackers, chocolate, soap, towels, tobacco, etc. In fact these men looked so smug and contented that one couldn't help feeling that they were glad they were prisoners, particularly when they thought of the limited allowance of food at home and of the hard and drudging work from which they had recently been taken away.

There is nothing particularly characteristic about German prisoners. I have seen thousands of them both at the front and in the rear zones. Put them in Tommy's clothes and it would be rather hard to tell them apart, except for one thing—the German soldier looks cowed and beaten: there is a hang-dog air about him which makes one think that he has been driven into battle with a whip; on the contrary, Tommy looks at you with a merry twinkle in his eye and radiates cheerfulness. He has the straightforward, independent bearing of the man born in a free country, who has long been used to feeling that he is as good as his officer above him and is worth as much to his country.

As I was going to the hospital one morning, I watched a band of twenty or thirty Germans march into the court-yard. One English guard in front

and one behind, with fixed bayonets, directed them to the barn where they were divided into two squads. A German non-commissioned officer acted as overseer. One squad ascended a ladder to the barn loft where it was put to work on the stored hay; the other squad, after picking up shovels, rakes, etc., began to clean out the court-yard.

I was anxious to talk with the prisoners so I went up to the guard to ask him whether any of them could speak English. He pointed out a sturdy fellow who, coming over to me, stood politely at attention.

"How are your men?" I asked.

"Very well, sir."

"Any of them sick?"

"No, sir, they are all very well."

"I suppose you will be glad when the war is over?"

"Ah, sir—" and then the tears began to roll down his cheeks.

Not so different from any other man, was he? The Germans know, as well as you and I know, that this war was forced on them by the Junker class. And let me tell you a secret—many of them pray

to the Lord for the extinction of these tyrants as much as you and I do.

The tears of the German didn't affect the guard very much. You could see that sentiment meant nothing to him, and that taking care of German prisoners was the last job on earth he wanted.

"What sort of men are they?" I asked.

"Rotten lot. They don't appreciate nothin' except a jab with a bayonet once in a while. A lazy lot of loafers, they are. The farmer gives 'em money for workin' and they loaf on the job 'alf the time if you let 'em. They gets just as good food as our boys an' plenty of warm clothes and blankets an' a good barn that ain't got more rats than any other barn. After all we does for 'em, I bet they go 'ome and tells the folks how cruelly they was treated.

"The other mornin', sir, our C. O. orders 'em out to work. It was freezin' cold and you would 'ave thought any man would be satisfied to work to keep warm. But they went on strike—said they weren't goin' to work any more for nothin'. So the C. O. gives 'em field punishment and you bet in about fifteen minutes they changed their minds."

Later in the day I was called to see one of them who had a ragged cut above one eye. He was a slim young boy, meek and mild-mannered. The wound wasn't serious, and he was deeply grateful for the attention I gave him.

I had been looking forward for some time for a chance to go to an entertainment of our divisional troop of actors. In the line some of these men had acted as my stretcher bearers. In the rest areas they give up soldiers' work and get themselves ready for a short skit of some kind. As naturally no females are allowed out here, it is necessary for some of the men to become female impersonators. I believe this is a very popular job, so all of them take turns at it, regardless of whether they have shapes, faces or voices to match the part.

A story is told about the "Royal Songsters," whose chief female impersonator had been taken sick. There was no one else in the cast to take his part. So one of the officers was appealed to to help them out. As he could not find anybody suitable, he decided to write a "chit" to the General about it. He wrote as follows: "Can you supply me with a female impersonator?" To which the

General replied: "I'd like to oblige you, but there are no females on the front line for personal use at present."

Our troupe were called "The Merry Mauves." I don't know the origin of the title, but they had a reputation for putting on a good show. The news of a performance by them in a near-by town was spread about some days in advance, and every one was waiting expectantly for the new *revue*.

The Colonel, the Q.-M. and I sent down for reserved seats early in the afternoon. The performance was to be given at 6.30 P. M. We got there in the nick of time and were escorted to the officers' row of front benches. The price of our seats was one franc, while the men paid thirty centimes. The profits from the shows go to a special fund which is used for the purchase of medical comforts for wounded men—chocolate, tea and cake.

The theatre was a large barny hall, unlighted except for the two candles placed on either side of the piano and the acetylene hand lamps (borrowed from the hospital), which were hidden behind the proscenium arch. The floor of the hall was of stone, and on it were placed row after row of

wooden benches, every one of which was crowded with smoking Tommies whose faces shone intently in the dim light.

The signal for the performance to commence, the hitting of a nail on a tin can, was given, and the orchestra, a man dressed in a white spotted domino and fool's cap, walked solemnly to the piano. He blew into his hands for a moment and then enjoyably banged away, until he restored his circulation.

The curtains were pulled apart and a magnificent view was presented—a railroad station with a train receding on the painted scenery. To the right, rear, was a door on which was painted "Waiting Room," but because of limited space on the stage it was made so small that none of the actors could get through it. The drops and sides were gardens and trees, borrowed from another setting. Any one could see with half an eye that it was a railroad station, and if he couldn't the Scotch porter who came out on the stage informed him of the fact.

The story was wonderfully clever. An assuming young gentleman wearing a monocle comes on to the stage, looking for his sweetheart whom he

must marry within twenty-four hours or else he will lose the money which his father has conditionally willed to him. He describes her minutely to the porter, telling him that she wears silk stockings on her—feet and a pearl necklace around her neck. The porter is brought into service with the aid of twenty-five pounds and of course picks out the wrong 'un who wears cotton stockings on her—feet and a coral necklace. He should have known she wasn't the right one for she carries a little baby (thank God, it was made of cotton), and doesn't she say in a deep base voice, "I am looking for my husband who I haven't seen in twenty years"?

Of course, Gertie, the heroine, appears after her dearly beloved has left. She is a petite, little thing. Her number ten feet are encased in number nine high-heeled, low shoes and she wears silk stockings almost like a lady. And her dress is very girlish and her face is very mannish. One front tooth is missing. Her beautiful black tresses are neatly concealed under a flower-bedecked straw hat. Her voice is a falsetto soprano, which unfortunately lacks the sob note.

After searching everywhere for her dearly be-

loved, she finds him hiding in the wings, which is sufficient cause for a song. After a general mix-up, when the lady with the baby appears, and the porter and his assistant make the usual cryptic comments, and the irate father of the girl raises Cain, and the Italian tenor in a real dress suit somehow gets on the stage, the plot comes to an end in the usual way. The only problem unsolved was, "Where was the husband of the woman with the baby?"

The scene of the second act of the *revue* was in an English railway coach, one of those sidedoor arrangements, which permitted the porter, who apparently was the porter at several stations, to step into the coach whenever the author said so. The annoying fact of a lady being placed in a compartment with two men, one of whom wanted to smoke and the other of whom didn't like smoke, made a good farce which was well enough acted and contained enough humour to keep the audience in an uproar.

Finally, there was the third and last act. The scenery had given out, so the railroad station was brought on again. It was a good background for

every one to get off something broadly amusing for example:

PORTER'S ASSISTANT: And what have your family been doing for the war?

PORTER: They have all been working mighty hard from the mither down to little Willie.

PORTER'S ASSISTANT: And little Willie is workin' for the war too? How old is little Willie?

PORTER: Little Willie is five years old.

PORTER'S ASSISTANT: And what has little Willie been doin' for the war?

PORTER: He has been makin' a shillin' a week, he has.

PORTER'S ASSISTANT: And how has he been makin' a shillin' a week?

PORTER: By sleepin' wid an ole lady what is afraid of aeroplanes.

No audience was ever more attentive, no audience was ever more appreciative. The actors were applauded at every turn, and no one criticized Gertie because she was missing a tooth and lisped. Even the woman with the baby—a tall, ungainly

fellow (not the baby), who hadn't had time to shave that day—made the men roar with laughter when she (he) took the baby up by the wrong end and stopped for a moment until she found which was supposed to be the head. The climax came when she threw the baby at the fast receding train.

The men like the sob stuff, and the more loving there is, even of a mismated pair, where the heroine is a "he," the more they like it. "Swinging in the Apple Tree," sung by the lover as he swung his sweetheart in a rope swing let down from the arms of an imaginary old apple tree, brought the tears to many a man's eye.

Of course the Italian opera singer in a real dress suit was brought in for a purpose. This was evident when the stage was cleared of the others and the one-man orchestra, who by this time had been playing almost steadily for two hours, played the opening bars of Pagliacci. The audience sat up more erectly and was as still as death. In a clear tenor voice the actor brought the song home to these men. One could have heard a pin drop until the bitter end, when the applause became deafening. "Give it to us again, wop." "*Chantez-vous* some

more," and other hearty yells brought him to the edge of the stage again. The men enjoy these serious songs when there are not too many of them. The English Tommy appreciates good music, particularly if it is well sung or played by some one who knows.

Even my frozen feet did not keep me from enjoying the performance. I had heard grand opera sung by the greatest stars in the world, I had listened to some of our greatest actors and actresses, I had seen burlesque from Weber and Fields down to Miner's Eight Avenue Theatre, but never in my life had I enjoyed a show more than this one. For behind it all was the earnest effort of the actors to put it over right, to give the men a good laugh so that they could forget the army and its troubles; the weird, shadowy faces of the men, sitting uncomfortably on their wooden benches, seriously absorbed in the play, trying to make the actors feel that their every effort was appreciated, made an impressive picture and more than made up for any bodily discomfort.

CHAPTER XIII

A WELL-SET-UP fellow, Captain Peart, wandered into the hospital grounds one day with a half-dozen lorries containing cook-stoves, kettles, timber, coal, and all the various paraphernalia of a cookery school. He informed us that he was commanding officer and had been instructed to find quarters for his school, his men and himself in our hospital and billets. It was a tight squeeze, but he was such a likable chap that we made room for him somehow and asked him to join our mess.

He had been an expert caterer before the war, had even gone into the profession deep enough to graduate from the King's School—not that the King runs the school, but his chef, who is some chef, does. Apparently they put some special falderals on his Majesty's food which can only be learned by a course in scientific cookery at the King's School. He knew the trade from A to Z, and could toss a hard biscuit into the air and make it come down as soft as a pancake.

We had many pleasant chats together, and I learned that his chief ambition had been to be a doctor.

"Forget it," I said to him one day. "The doctoring business is all right, but what is better than to tickle the palate until your gastronomical muscles work and at the same time be able to make artistic wedding cakes? As a doctor you see the beginning and end of life—both painful. As a boss caterer you see the middle of life—exceedingly pleasurable. People brag more about their caterers than they do about their doctors, unless the doctor is a successful beauty specialist."

He was a wonderful artist, too, in an amateur sort of way. In his kit he had an easel, brushes, paints, crayons and all that, and a clever portrait in oils of his batman who was almost as good looking as Jimmie. Before I left I got him to make a crayon sketch of me. If he had had time to get my characteristic features, it might have looked like me. Anyway it's a grateful souvenir.

There is a cooking school attached to each army, under the command of a captain. To it are sent various men who have suddenly become culinarily

ambitious. It doesn't matter whether you ever were a cook before. When you finish the course you can bluff a soldier to a standstill. For example in Peart's little book, entitled "Cooking in the Field," you find the following: "Every effort must be made to vary the diet to the greatest extent possible. To serve the same dishes day after day shows the lack of initiative and interest on the part of the cook (housewives, please take notice), besides making the meals dull and monotonous for the men. A pudding of some kind or another (it doesn't say what kind) can well be provided every day when units are out of the trenches, by utilizing spare pieces of bread, flour, biscuits (hardtack), dried fruit, jam, rice, oatmeal. Care should be taken that all spare pieces of bread or biscuits that are not consumed are returned to the cook-house for this purpose."

The result of this teaching was a variation in diet as follows:

Monday.

Breakfast: Oatmeal porridge, bread, bacon and tea.

Dinner: A stew containing beef or bully, potatoes, carrots and water, rice pudding.

Supper: Tea, jam and bread.

Tuesday.

Breakfast: Bread, tea, bacon and porridge.

Dinner: A stew containing water, carrots, beef, and potatoes, rice pudding.

Supper: Bread, jam and tea.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday—the same, unless the oatmeal, bread, rice or jam give out.

A few days later we again packed our wagons and started on our way to the front. We were to make the journey in three stages, so that the men and transport would keep together on the march. The weather had changed for the worse, and a thaw set in that cut up the roads horribly.

The march the first day to Rosieres was only twelve miles, so that we were able to get to our destination in daylight. The men were billeted in a large, dilapidated schoolhouse, and the officers quartered in a deserted mansion, which must have been quite livable in peace times. Unfortunately,

the owners having taken their furniture with them when they departed, there was nothing left for our comfort but the floors and enclosing walls. To add to our discomfort, no fuel of any kind could be obtained. So there was nothing to do but to retire early and stay under blankets as long as possible. My room was of particular interest because a part of one wall was missing. This defect was due to a Boche shell which somehow went out of its way to hit it.

We started on our next fourteen miles' march to Bethincourt before daylight. The sun came out over the eastern hills early in the morning and helped to warm us up. I enjoyed this walk very much, for it was not long enough to be tiresome and the roads had frozen hard during the night. Moreover, there were many things of interest to be seen, miles and miles of barb-wire, old deserted trenches now overgrown with rank weeds, and a number of old German dug-outs. We rested on the side of one of these for a few minutes, so I had a chance to investigate. There was a central open chamber from which branched out on either side, long, narrow corridors which dipped into the

earth a hundred to two hundred feet. Numerous small rooms, cut out of the earth and propped up by beams, ran off from the corridors—subterranean chambers, which even at this late date (for the Boche had been gone for over a year) were dry and hard.

At a railroad crossing I saw the distinct outline of an American hat and rightly surmised that some of our engineers were working here. We had to stop for a passing train, and so I rushed over to the officers' hut, grabbed the man I found there by the hand, said "Cheerio" and rushed back into the ranks before the Colonel saw me. This officer must have thought that I was crazy. I was crazy to grab an American by the hand—any old person who came from "God's chosen country."

Our new billets at Bethincourt didn't look very inviting. There were a number of small, wooden shacks in a muddy field, but we were fortunate in finding some good stoves and plenty of wood fuel. In a short time we had our twenty patients, that we carried along in the horse ambulances, comfortably housed. Three of us were given a

shack to ourselves, while the Colonel occupied an alcove next to the mess.

Christie, who had preceded us to attend to the billeting, apparently hadn't been very cordially received by the ambulance that had moved away.

"They didn't seem to have room for me anywhere," he said. "I gave them all sorts of hints, told them I had no place to go. They suggested that I try to get a bunk in Nesle. So I hopped on the Ford, rode there, scoured the town and couldn't find anything. I was some mad—and tired. Then I saw a Red Cross flag in front of an old convent, and so I inquired there. It's run as a sort of children's hospital and orphanage by the American Red Cross. Captain Baldwin greeted me cordially, and when I told him my troubles he insisted on giving me a real, live bed to sleep in. Gee! it felt great to have sheets around you. I didn't want to get up this morning. He has some females there too, nice women; nurses from the States, I think."

I glowed all over; for at last one of my countrymen had come out in his true colours and helped

me to repay my old friend for all his kindnesses. I told him how happy I was about it.

"Hays, how would you like to have them over for dinner tomorrow night?" asked the C. O.

"Great!" I said.

"In the morning, go over there in one of the ambulances. Ask the O. C. and all the nurses. It will be a novelty to have women at an ambulance mess. And while you are in town, see if you can't get some good dry champagne and a few decent eatables."

So bright and early the next morning I was on my way. I found the old convent and soon made myself acquainted. Captain Baldwin, a bright young fellow from Johns Hopkins University with his four female aides, was taking care of all the sick children in the neighbourhood. There recently had been an epidemic of diphtheria, and three of the four nurses were laid up after their antitoxin inoculation. However, I prevailed on him and one of the nurses, a Miss Miller, a charming nurse from the same hospital, to accept my invitation.

We made great preparations, and our cook put

forth every effort. When they arrived, Savage, the mess servant, had the table spread with a clean cloth and had found enough boxes to sit upon. There were no napkins, but we had almost enough knives, forks, spoons and plates. A large box of Mirror candies had reached me that day with some good American cookies and nuts. These were placed decoratingly around the table. A number of candles on cigarette tins gave the place a comfortable glow.

I'm sure Miss Miller enjoyed her dinner, for never was more attention paid to any woman. She was the queen of the feast. First, we had hot soup, which was followed by delicious fish, roast beef, fried potatoes, string beans and a real home-made apple pie. Add to this, whisky and soda, champagne, candy, nuts, cakes, cigars and cigarettes.

When they were leaving, I asked Miss Miller if she would like to see our bunk and the hospital. She wasn't agreeably impressed with our sleeping quarters and she raised her hands in horror when she saw the sick men sleeping on the floor. It was hard to convince her that they were comfortable.

"Miss Miller," the Colonel said to her as she was getting into the Ford, "it has been a great pleasure to have you. Sometimes we long for female society and this dinner, with you as our guest of honour, will live in our memories. Write back to your friends in America and tell them that you are probably the first woman to dine with a field ambulance near the firing line."

The following day we were again on the move. I was sent ahead this time to act as billeting officer, and so I found the dear old town which was to be our resting place for many a week. Dury was one of the few places near the front that had been untouched by German shells. Civilians were still there, so I was able to find comfortable quarters for the officers and most uncomfortable quarters for the men.

The village was built round a small park, which at one time may have been beautiful but now was mainly occupied by large Adrian huts and cast-off, farm implements. As one entered, presented to his view on the right was a large, unkempt, walled-in court-yard along two sides of which were wooden buildings to be used as mess

rooms and cook-houses for the men. At the rear was a combination house and barn filled with dank hay and manure. Later investigation showed that the army considered the second story habitable, for it contained over a hundred wire bunks for the men. On either side of the muddy road were a number of straw-thatched dwellings, more or less the worse for wear, but which I marked with chalk as quarters for the sergeants, shoemaker, tailor, motor transport drivers and A. S. C. men. As one turned the corner, he saw before him the remains an old château beyond iron-trellised gates and the inevitable court-yard. This château was reserved for the higher authorities. Another turn brought me to the schoolhouse, one room of which I was allowed to reserve for "walking wounded." Beyond the last corner was a fairly respectable brick building which since the beginning of the war had been used as a hospital, so there was no question about my taking it over for that purpose. In front of it was a large red cross made of stone —the arms of the cross of cracked red brick, the rest of the circle filled in with loose white stone. The idea was to point the place out to visiting

enemy aeroplanes so that the pilot could have a decent target to shoot at.

In this little village I spent many an enjoyable hour. Although only about seven miles from the front, we were in a quiet section where only guns of small calibre were used, so that we seldom heard the firing. The officers were luxuriously quartered in civilian houses, where there were real beds to sleep upon, beds with mattresses and sheets and all that.

Parnell and I took a room together next door to the mess, in a one-story house, consisting of a kitchen and our room. The other inhabitants of the house were a mother, a granddaughter and a little light-haired eight-year old girl. On a little French stove in the kitchen they cooked their simple meal; on the large, centre, oilclothed table they ate; in the large feather bed in one corner they slept.

Our room contained two three-quarter beds, a few tables, a screened fireplace, two or three large chests full of stored clothes and a locked window. The ceiling was heavily beamed and damp, and

the sheets on the bed were so clammy that I had Jimmie cover them with blankets.

That first night we retired early. By the light of a candle, flickering at my bedside, I read an article in a penny magazine on "The Kaiser's Right-Hand Woman." The story went on to reveal her machinations as a spy and let you into the secret that she was a niece of old Hindenburg, whom we know as the finest trench builder in the world.

As we lay there quietly, a familiar sound assailed my ears. There was a pitter-patter of soft, little feet on the floor above, like so many O'Sullivanized rubber heels running lightly to and fro. The race became fast and furious, and finally I made up my mind that a baseball game was in progress and that one of the players was trying to steal second base while another one tried to reach home. There was an awful scramble and scraping, and suddenly a fearful thud on the floor —as though a big fat rooter over near third base had fallen out of the grandstand.

My companion awoke from a doze.

"My God! What's that?" he yelled.

"Nothing—only rats," I replied calmly, although I had a shivering feeling all over.

"Gee—I thought that it was a bomb." And then he went off to sleep again.

In the morning Jimmie awakened me from a sound sleep.

"Morning, Jimmie," I said. "Where were you billeted last night?" I always like to ask Jimmie leading questions.

"In the barn, sor," he said.

"Pretty comfortable, there?"

"Not so you could notice it, sor."

"By the way, Jimmie," I continued, "speaking of rats, have you seen any of those four-legged animals?"

Jimmie looked at me seriously for a moment and then showed his two rows of beautiful false teeth.

"Did you say rats, sor? Never in my life did I see so many. You mayn't believe me, sor, but last night when we were tryin' to sleep in them wire beds, we hears a noise like as if a German army was coming, and believe me, sor, the rats were formin' into fours and then into companies and then into battalions. They marches down the

billet, four abreast, keepin' good step like old regulars, and with their grey coats they looked like Germans too. When they were dismissed, one of them—bigger than a cat, jumps on my bunkie. He gives a whack and it lands on me and believe me, sor, it was that big I couldn't move it."

It is hard to believe that there are rats out here as big as cats, but it is a fact. I never had one come near enough to bite me, but I have seen them and that is enough.

Our ambulance was detailed to take care of all the skin cases of the division. As soon as the men heard of it, all of them developed skin disease, or so I might have thought from the way they came filing in. Scabies (itch-mite) came first, and then his compatriot *impetigo*, which is the aftermath of scratching for a cootie. A few of those animals arrived also, mixed in with a boil or two. Our hospital accommodated seventy-five patients, but before two days had elapsed we had three hundred, so that we had to quarter them in barns until we established a branch hospital in another town. On account of my constant contact with these patients I got pretty scratchy my-

self so that I had to take a bath at least once a week.

Yet with it all there was an air of cheerfulness about the place. The skin-diseased Tommies sang and smiled cheerfully because they were out of the line; our men felt happy because they were settled at last and because it was their nature to smile. They believed in the song:

Smile, damn yer, smile!
For when you smile
Another smiles,
And soon there's miles
And miles of smiles,
And life's worth while
If you but smile,
So smile, damn yer, smile!

Here we met many officers from other organizations who would drop in for tea in the late afternoon. Among them I remember particularly the officers of the 2nd Co. D. S. C., the C. O. of which was Captain "Davy" Mears, as gallant and happy an Irish gentleman as one could wish to see. He always had a good joke to tell you, but his merry face would become serious enough if you talked

to him about your dear ones far away or got him talking about the *only* girl, whom he had married on his last leave.

"Did you hear the good one about the General?" he asked one day.

"No."

"Well, I'll tell you. This General had a good many men up for court-martial. And every time he would sentence a man to ten days or field punishment or something like that, when the man was walking out of the door he would say, 'And you.' Everybody wondered what he meant by 'And you,' but no one had nerve enough to ask him. Finally a new subaltern came to the division and when he was present at one of these court-martials he hears the General say, 'And you.' He couldn't understand it. So he asked one of the officers, 'Why does the General always say, "And you" when a man goes out of the door after he has sentenced him?' 'I don't know,' answered the other. 'None of us has nerve enough to ask him. Suppose you ask him.' So the next time the subaltern sees the General, he says to him, 'General, I've noticed that every time you sentence

a man, just when he is leaving the room you say, "And you." May I respectfully ask what you mean?' The General laughed. 'Well, you see,' he said, 'I know that every time I sentence a man, he says to himself, "Go to ——." So I say, "And you." ' "

Mears was telling us one day of a dear Irish friend of his, C. O. of a D. S. C. who always said what he meant, generals or no generals. One morning his company received notice that they would be inspected by A. A. Q. M. G. or the D. A. D. O. S. or some other initials. The General accompanied him to the field where the highly polished wagons and freshly combed horses were drawn up on parade. The General looked over the horses first.

"Your horses are poorly shod," he said, turning to the C. O. "Haven't you any blacksmith?"

"Yes, sir. I have five expert blacksmiths and only one damn hammer among them. How am I expected to shoe a hundred horses with one hammer?"

"Why don't you indent for more?" roared the General.

"Sure and I indent every day. It takes three sheets of paper for every shoe-nail I want and I've wasted enough paper to get a keg full of nails and a dozen hammers and nary a one did I get."

I would spend my morning hours in visiting the sick and the afternoons in strolling about the beautiful green country, which now showed signs of spring. Well-ploughed fields, farmed by the soldiers and the few civilians—unkempt old men and young boys—extended for miles. There were numerous streams which gurgled merrily under the small, shaky wooden bridges. One could never want for an interesting view if he kept his eyes open.

Many other troops besides our own were billeted in the village, sometimes only for a night, sometimes for a day or so. I got to know some of them well, for their sick were often treated at our hospital.

One afternoon I was sitting in our mess, writing letters to the dear ones at home. The sun had come out. The morning had been heavy with impending rain. An impression of music came to my ears, but it was a vague echo of a band in the

far away. The boom of the drum at one time seemed to resolve itself into a continued and more vigorous pounding, more vibrant, more resounding; and the window and door in front of me gave a twinkling shudder. The distant boomings, like far-off thunder, continued regularly at first and then less frequently and more irregularly, until they stopped altogether. When the booming stopped, the weird quietness around me was more nerve racking than this murderous cry of the enemy shells. Then again—a soft detonation, but with it a gradual crescendo roll. There could be no mistake now, no trick of the imagination; for, mingling with the boom of the base and snare drum, were the blare of the cornet, the growl of the saxophone and the shrill piping of the flute.

I walked over to the village square, which no doubt in peace times is the quiet home of beautiful, stately trees and tender grass. I could visualize the children playing there, happy and care-free—playing innocent games with no thought of the morrow. But now? There are no signs of grass, no trees, no flowers. In the far corners of the square stand the long, ugly, symmetrical, Adrian

huts, an army product whose only advantages are that they keep out the rain sometimes and provide accommodations for a hundred men, more or less, who huddle in their wire beds at night, trying to keep the dampness of the earthen floor out of their bones. The clinging, clayey mud is now churned into a thousand puddles. Most of the park is occupied by cast-off, farm and road implements—discarded reapers with prong-like appendages; heavy, low, iron rollers for the roads, reddened by rust; and clumsy mowing machines, partially destroyed, the heavy wooden wheels sunk in the mud. A small open space remains where the khaki-clothed bandsmen stand. The emblem on their coat-sleeves, a miniature drum in brass, denotes their calling; the red, brown and blue tab on their shoulder shows the battalion to which they are attached; their cap badges indicate the division to which they belong.

The men stand in a circle in front of their long, slender music stands, their sergeant and leader in the centre waving his small baton.

"Now, you men," he says, "tyke yer 'ands out of yer pockets an' stand at 'shun. You'se ain't

'ere for a 'oliday, yer 'ere to learn that piece an' yer goin' to stay 'ere till yer get it. Yer goin' ter play in Ham on Toosday whin the General's goin' ter be there an' I expec' yer to play like 'ell. All ready now, boys!"

He lifts his baton. The band starts playing, first softly and gently and, as the men gain confidence in themselves, a little more forcibly until the sound of the booming guns far away; the machine-like whirr of the aeroplanes in the pale, blue sky; the rattle of the ammunition limbers along the near-by road, are drowned in the melody of sound. The trombone tries to out-do the cornet, the flute screams to the birds and the bass and snare drums are uninterruptedly beating their staccato notes. Everything goes well until the final bars when everybody is in a hurry and tries to finish first. Music has ceased: it is a chaos of noise.

The Sergeant looks at his men witheringly, wrinkling his face into a satanic, sarcastic smile.

"Whad yer tink yer were doin'?" he says. "Do yer tink yer playin' a waltz, er a march, er ragtime? Yer does well for a minit an' then yer tries

to play faster than er aeroplane. We ain't in no 'urry, but yud tink we was, from the playin'. Tike it from me, the faster yer play, the slower yer gits there. Don't blow into yer 'ands. It hain't cold. Save yer wind fer yer instruments. 'Shun! We starts them last two lines over again."

The men returned to their task grimly. The bass-drummer, a grey-haired, doubled-up man, past middle age, tries to straighten the kinks out of his bones and longs to forget that it is miserably cold. His blue hands wave his sticks clumsily. *Trombones* pulls the long rods of his instrument backward and forward as a sort of warming up exercise; *Bass Horn* pulls out his mouthpiece and drops the excess saliva; *Cornet* waves his shining brass up and down at his side; *Flute* jerkily fingers his stops. Every man in the circle is trying hard to be cheerful and obedient while the cold creepers run down his back and his toes are slowly freezing.

"Tat, Tat," speaks the leader's baton. As it falls, the brass throated instruments send their music into the air. The last two lines are played over and over again until all are playing in unison;

and then a grand finale, a rendering of the whole piece, discordantly in parts, ends the afternoon rehearsal.

"That'll be about all fer today," said the Sergeant. "Company dismissed!"

The clouds had gathered again and the sun was sinking low.

CHAPTER XIV

"COURAGE is a peculiar thing," I said to Parnell late one afternoon as we were taking a walk after tea. "I've been thinking about it a great deal lately. One gets into the habit of doing the right thing out here. I mean he acts like a brave man because every one round him does the same. I've often wondered who were the cowards in this crowd, or maybe there aren't any."

"It's in the air, Hays," he answered. "And, another thing—the men develop a certain fatalism which stands them in good stead when they know that they are 'going West.' Funny thing, I don't care whether a man ever thought of a hereafter before he joined the army. When he's out to the front line he knows there's one. All of us feel that we may pass into the 'great beyond' where we shall meet all those dear pals who died so gloriously by our sides.

"I asked one of the men once," he continued, "what he thought about the dying proposition.

" 'I ain't afeared to die,' he told me, ' 'specially when it's for my country. There ain't any of us afeared to die. What we is afeared of is that we might have to live without feet or arms or eyes. When I sees a man buried alive next to me and see two more pals go under, I says to myself, "The next time it's your turn." And I wouldn't care if it was. I expects sometime I'll meet all my old pals in Heaven where we can cuss the Germans and not be afeared of bullets either.'

"There is another funny thing about these men. They cuss all day and use the Lord's name in vain, but there is hardly a night that they don't pray hard for their loved ones to a God they feel is watching over them."

"While we are talking on this subject of the Hereafter, let me read you a clipping I cut out of a magazine the other day. It's from a man who has seen things.

" 'There is not a single man in the trenches to-day who questions immortality. When a man is

face to face with death, he cannot convince himself that death is the end. He fears death, in the many gruesome forms in which it is meted out to him, and "The Great Beyond" to which he may be mercilessly hurried along. His conscience tells him when death stares him in the face that mortal life on this earth is not the end: hence the reason for the fervent prayer for ever on his lips when in face of danger—a prayer for the prolongation of his mortal life.'

" 'The stricken man, who lies limbless on the battle-field, mortally wounded, and whose last spark of life is fast ebbing away, prays for the pardon of his past misdeeds; prays to the "Creator of Mankind" to be merciful in His judgment of him; for he is fearful of the life to come and that he may not attain "The Great Hope" which is forcing itself into his soul as he draws nearer the end.' "

"There is a great deal of truth in that," I said. "But the kind of men we have out here are the kind that in peace times would run a mile to get away from a fight. I've tried to analyse courage—in

myself, for example. I don't claim to be particularly brave and I'm sure a rat would scare me silly."

He laughed.

"You're not the only one that is afraid of rats. I'm scared of the damn things myself, and I know of men, some of them big guns too, who would rather face a thousand bullets than one rat.

"Let me tell you a funny one about that," he continued. "One night six officers and I were billeted in a Nissen hut in a deserted village. One of the men was a lieutenant-colonel who had all sorts of medals. He was a very devil in the line. He'd been wounded twice in action. But he was dead scared of rats. We turned in about ten o'clock, and each of us fell sound asleep in less than no time. Our bedding rolls were laid on the floor, the Colonel's over in the far end somewhat separated from the others.

"It must have been about midnight when I heard the most unearthly yell. By the moonlight dimly shining through the window, I could see the gaunt figure of the Colonel standing in his pyjamas on his bedding roll, trembling like a leaf, his hands

shaking with palsy, his teeth chattering and the tears rolling down his cheeks. I never saw a school-girl more hysterical.

" 'What's the matter?' I called. By that time the other men had awakened and all of us were sitting up in our blankets.

" 'My God,' he said, 'rats, rats. I—I wo-woke up and found one of them sleeping on my shoulder.' And he then cried some more.

"We laughed at the ludicrous figure, of course, but there wasn't a one of us who didn't shiver a bit when he got under his blankets again."

"Reminds me of old Marshal Ney," I said. "I don't suppose there ever was a braver man on the battle-field, and yet he frankly admitted that he was dead scared to go into a dark room alone. Men certainly are peculiar. There's hardly a man out here who doesn't carry some lucky-piece, some fetish which he believes in implicitly. I've heard many a man say that as long as he had his lucky-piece with him, he was sure he would suffer no harm. I carry a little Chinese dog in my pocket book which a cousin of mine wished on me before I left the States. I wouldn't lose it for the world.

Some of these lucky-pieces are funny. One man carries a half of a silver sixpence. His wife has the other half. Another carries a lock of hair. One general has a little piece of string hanging out of his breast pocket on to which is tied a small piece of wood. He is sure if he ever lost it he would die. What do you carry?"

He opened his coat and showed me a black button sewed to the lining.

"See that?" he said. "Well, before I came over my chum's wife sewed that in my coat, and my wife sewed one into his coat. Behind the lines I wear any old coat, but whenever I go into action I put on this one. One day I got halfway to the front with the wrong coat on. When I discovered the mistake, I got so scared that I trembled all over. So at the next halt I got out my kit and put on the right coat. I was as brave as a lion after that."

"Ever read 'The Red Planet' by Locke?" I asked.

"No," he replied.

"It's the best story about a man's faith and superstition that I ever read. The hero once did a

cowardly thing in the South African War. In this war he had won all sorts of honours. He always carried a little cane in whose luck he believed implicitly. Carrying that cane made him brave. As he was going over the top his cane was smashed to smithereens and he was lost—was going to turn turtle—when a shell zipped by him and blinded him for life. Personally I have never been superstitious, but I'd feel awful crawly if I lost my Chinese dog."

We approached our mess. I kept thinking over the things that we had been talking about and wondering just how much difference there was between the manifestations of courage and cowardice. During peace times one is seldom put to a test, and he certainly gives little thought to dying. That's because he so seldom sees death, and when he does it's usually death after some lingering, suffering disease. Out here, on the contrary, death is so common that one gets into the habit of feeling that it's coming to him sometime and that it may as well come now. Is there anything finer than to give up one's life for one's country?

Later we were sitting round the table in the of-

ficers' mess, digesting a hearty dinner. The Nissen hut was overcrowded with officers' luggage, two benches and a wooden table which held the remnants of our meal. Three sputtering candles, resting on upturned cigarette tins, threw wavering shadows against the walls.

Savage, our mess servant, in his spotted tunic and muddy boots, noiselessly entered before the wind of the opened door. He held one side of his face in his hand.

"What's the matter, Savage?" I asked.

"Got an awful toothache. Haven't been able to sleep for two nights. Will you give it a pull, Captain?"

"Surely," I answered. "Come over to the dispensary with me."

I knew I would have to come to the tooth-pulling job sooner or later. Every doctor at the front has to pull teeth, but I wished the job on some one else every time before. I reckoned that if I didn't consider the first few patients on whom I had to practice, I could learn to pull teeth just as well as I had learned to run an automobile. The only thing to do is to get hold of the tooth and have

implicit confidence in yourself. If the forceps doesn't slip off, the tooth is bound to come out.

The job is made easier for you because the manufacturer of the forceps, realizing that the men who pull teeth out here are not professional dentists, give you only five forceps to choose from, on each of which is stamped "upper incisors," "lower incisors," "right," "left," etc. If you know the names of the teeth it is only a question of holding the patient firmly while you rock to and fro.

I sat Savage upon a stool in the dispensary and prepared my "upper molar right" forceps by dipping it in a permanganate of potash solution. One of my men flashed my electric lamp into his open mouth and I, standing in front of him, slipped the blades underneath the gums, and around the body of the tooth. In a moment the tooth was out, clean and whole.

My hand trembled.

"Gee!" Savage said. "That was great. Never hurt at all. I've had many a tooth yanked, Captain, but this is the first one that didn't hurt. Guess you must have had a lot of experience."

"Oh, an old hand can do anything," I answered non-committally.

Savage whistled a song as he departed.

He came into the mess a half hour later to clear the table.

"Savage, are you an Irishman?" asked the Colonel. We always asked Savage some foolish question.

"Naturalized, sir," he answered like a flash.

After the laughter had subsided, I said:

"Pretty hard lines for a fellow like that to go puttering around the kitchen and waiting on officers. Never gives him a chance to show what he's worth."

"Didn't you know Savage was up for a military medal?" asked Parnell.

"No."

"This is the third time he's been recommended. That man has a heart of gold and the courage of a lion."

"What did he do?" I asked.

"In our last stunt," Christie continued, "Savage was one of my stretcher-bearers. Servants aren't excluded from soldier work, you know. We got

into a particularly hot corner, dead and wounded lying all over the road, and any number of maimed horses and mules. It was an awful sight. We had to run our patients on wheeled stretchers over a road which was registered by the Johnnies. Some of my men were injured, others killed. Well, Savage was on one end of a stretcher taking in a wounded officer when his companion on the other end was potted by a machine-gun bullet. Killed. Savage went on a little way only to find that the bullets were coming over so thick that he couldn't go on. Moreover, the road was blocked with dead men. He carried his patient over to the side of the road where there was a little protection from the rising ground and laid him down. With his bare hands he dug a hole large enough to put the officer in and then stood guard over him for eight solid hours. Just stood right up in front of him amidst that downpour of lead and used himself to shield his patient."

"Gosh, that's great," I said.

"We are all proud of Savage," said the Colonel. "But there are thousands of youngsters in our army who have done wonderful things and who have

shown almost superhuman bravery—especially the R. A. M. C. men and S. B.'s. Bravery is so cheap now-a-days that you only notice the exception."

"That reminds me," I said, "of an article on stretcher-bearers that I cut out of the *Daily Mail.* It's written by a fellow named Hodson who knows what he is talking about. I'd like to read it to you." I took the clipping out of my pocket. "This is what he says:

"I have yet to meet the Flying Corps man," wrote an airman in the *Daily Mail* the other day, "who does not place in honour the work of the infantry before his own.

"As an infantryman I have yet to meet the foot soldier who does not readily agree that the most heroic lads in the battalion are the stretcher-bearers. I never yet met a stretcher-bearer who didn't do his job faithfully and well, and doing that means that he has won decoration after decoration —even if he isn't wearing them. For there is excitement in fighting, there is quick pulsing of the blood, there is the 'devil'; but there is none of these in kneeling in a shell-swept zone beside a shattered lad, binding his hurts.

"My own battalion was particularly fortunate in its 'S. B.'s.' We had several lads who had been medical students, and we had as much confidence in them as your city man has in his Harley-Street physician. That was a great comfort, because one's life depends a good deal, as an infantryman, on one's company 'S. B.'s'—about four in number—for it is ten to one it will be one of them that will bandage one's wounds in the first place.

"Stretcher-bearers are selected from the ranks of each battalion, and they become 'specialists,' like Lewis gunners or bombers. They work under and are trained by the battalion medical officer, and receive lectures and demonstrations at his hands. Actual carrying is perhaps their least important job.

"Not of the R. A. M. C., wearing no distinguishing mark except a narrow white band—more often khaki coloured with mud—with the letters in red, 'S. B.' worn around the sleeve above the elbow, having with them probably no weapons of defence because they are generally too busy to carry or use them, theirs is a Christ-like task—to bear everything and not hit back. They work in the

very midst of battle, where there is little time or opportunity to discriminate—even if the enemy wished to do so—between tenders of wounded and fighters. They seldom get promotion because they are but a tiny band (sometimes the most senior of them is a lance corporal), and they don't get all the medals they win. Their ordinary, every day, every night job is tending wounded under fire. I have never yet known an 'S .B.' hesitate to run into the middle of shell-fire or any other fire to help a hurt man; I have never seen an 'S. B.' with the 'wind-up.'

"The first one I met flopped into the hut one night about eight o'clock (in England). 'Tired?' I said. He nodded. 'Just finished a twenty-five-mile march, carrying stretchers. Doc was seeing what we could do.' He spoke with quiet triumph.

"Next time was in a crater near La Bassee—a hot place for snipers, rifle, grenades, and so on. The trenches were narrow, too narrow for stretchers, and my big 'S. B.' friend solved the question of the wounded by carrying them all out on his back. How, think you, 'S. B.'s' fared carrying stretchers over ground so deeply muddy that it took

us eight hours to traverse a thousand yards, when relieving? But they did it—God alone knows how—and made one journey after another.

"The last time I saw them at work was near High Wood, on the Somme. I was in a saphead perhaps a hundred yards from the enemy. It was lively because the Boche had the 'wind-up,' and every now and then he put up green lights for artillery support, and we got 'strafed.' Just after one affair had subsided I heard a clear, strong voice in front shouting, 'This way, Bill. Sure he's this way.' I hailed him, and he replied that he was a Middlesex 'S. B.' (We had relieved the Middlesex that afternoon.) The ta-ta-ta-ta-ta of a machine-gun swept across, but these two men took no notice. They were searching for life in the waste of death, and at last they found it—life with two broken legs but a great cheeriness. They came and borrowed my ground sheet and brought the lad in on that.

" 'Knowed as there was a fellah out there,' said the 'S. B.' 'A bloke told me so down at Mametz, so I came back for him, see? How are you, mate?'—to the wounded lad. 'We'll soon place

you out of it. You're all right, you are. Blighty as easy as easy.'

"And off they went down the trench with the lad on the ground sheet.

"This may or may not be a holy way, but stretcher-bearing is God's own calling."

"Hits the nail on the head all right," exclaimed Christie. "My men did many stunts like that in the last show."

The conversation drifted off into a philosophical and psychological discussion on courage and every one admitted that the deeds of heroism in this war, performed by men who were mainly soldiers in the making, were remarkable. It isn't as though we had professional soldiers out here. The men are mild-mannered clerks, artisans, schoolboys, mechanics, ne'er-do-wells dressed up in soldiers' clothes. Is it the clothes that make the man? Or is it an inborn love of country which arouses all one's good qualities and glorifies death on the battle-field?

CHAPTER XV

I HAD become settled contentedly in our little village and had made up my mind that I'd as soon stay there as anywhere for the duration of the war. The food was good, the beds were clean, I could take a bath at least once a week, and I could spend the afternoons visiting my friends in near-by places and take tea with them. Moreover, January was turned into June—so much so that Nature tried to poke a little green into the muddy fields.

But one morning the order came through for me to report to a battalion to take the place of a medical officer who was going home on leave. I had been told that sooner or later I would have my tour of the trenches. I was glad that I was to go into a quiet sector for there were a lot of things I wanted to learn about front line work, and I was most anxious to write to the folks at home that I had been over the top and seen No-Man's

Land first hand. Yet I wasn't particularly anxious to have my head blown off, so a "cushy" spot looked good to me.

I packed up my belongings, jumped into the jumpy Ford and was driven to the town designated in my orders, Fluquires, a town located about six kilometres behind the front line. Now I had passed this place once or twice on my visits to our A. D. S. but I had never seen any town. There were large mounds of brick and muddy clay and soldiers, so I wondered just what sort of billets I was coming to.

We turned off the main road to the left and stopped before battalion headquarters. An agreeable surprise it was to find an orderly row of little, trim, brick huts which looked cozy and clean, hidden in the side of the hill so that they couldn't be seen by any one on the road. The pioneers had built a brick-paved quadrangle in front of these huts, enclosing a little garden which in due time would form a beauty spot in this oasis of mud. A stout wall of stone and brick, mortared with mud, about two feet high, enclosed the quadrangle, and in front of this was placed an almost full-

sized statue of the Crucified Christ—common in all the small villages of France. A few hundred yards beyond the mud-spattered roads met at the sentry post, where, day and night, a grim-visaged guard in khaki stood. In the distance could be seen the barracks for the men, a few Adrian huts and a number of improvised brick abodes.

I was cordially greeted by the C. O., Colonel Cox, a very fine English gentleman who had recently seen service in Salonika, and who had a row of ribbons extending almost to his coat sleeve; and his second in command, Major Rose, a tall, stalwart, handsome, brave man who became one of my dearest friends. Then I was taken on a tour so that by noon time I had met all the officers of the various companies.

Battalion life is exceedingly fascinating, particularly for a medical officer, for he is part of headquarters staff and is his own boss from sick parade in the morning until he has seen the last man take a bath at night. The officers are pleasant comrades who don't give him a chance to talk shop. In the battalion, he learns the war game from A to Z. In a short time he knows how to handle a

rifle, how to fire a pistol, how to read a trench map, the intricacies of a Lewis gun, the drill and battle formation of the men, the peculiarities of a horse, the disposition of garbage, the "manure dump," and a thousand and one other details.

My first duty in the morning was attendance at sick parade. The sergeants of the various companies would wean out the "ailers," march them up to my shack and stand there with them until I had finished my inspection, for it was the "noncoms" duty to see that his men reported sick and to keep his hold on any malingerers. If a man were marked merely "duty," he was in for it; for that meant that the M. O. considered him a faker and worthy of field punishment.

My orderly and corporal awaited me in their small quarters where we placed a table on which were laid a number of clinical thermometers, a few needful instruments, a dental set, cotton, gauze, iodine, and bandages.

Sick parade would go something like this:

"Private John Smith!" I would order.

Sergeant Brown would call, "Private Smith!

'Shun!" And Private Smith would limp into the room with a shoe and stocking in one hand.

"What's the matter?" I would ask.

"Me 'eel, I. C. T., I think. I can't march."

"M. D. Corporal. Put on a dry dressing."

"Private Jones!" I would call.

Jones is a scrawny individual with a cast in one eye. He stoops as he enters the room and coughs something dreadful.

"What's the matter?" I ask.

"I dunno, sir. I 'ave such pains in me back I can 'ardly walk an' I coughs me bloomin' 'ead off."

"Yesterday you had a stomach ache and the day before you had a sore throat. Can't you bend your back?"

"No, sir."

So I drop my pencil on the floor and without hesitation, out of sheer politeness of course, Private Jones picks it up without any difficulty.

The next man is Private Dawkins with a toothache.

"When did you clean your teeth last?" I ask.

I look into his filthy mouth and see the swollen gums over the few remaining decayed teeth.

"Aint' never cleaned 'em, sir. Didn't know you 'ad to clean 'em."

"Get out!" I yell. "Don't you ever come near me again until you can show me a tooth-brush."

Thus in the morning I see five or six sore heels and toes, two stomach aches, a pain in the chest (real), two pains in the chest (unreal), a number of decayed teeth and possibly one sick man.

On pleasant mornings, after sick call and sanitary rounds, I used to wander over in the near-by field and watch the men at their various stunts. A Tommy is never allowed to be idle, you know, and in these rest quarters he is kept going from early in the morning until tea time to get the stiffness out of his joints, as the Colonel used to say to me.

Here was a small crowd of men standing round a corporal who had a Lewis gun in front of him which he was dismantling. "The Lewis gun," I could hear him say, "is *the* gun of the army and so you men can shoot it straight, I am going to explain its insides to you. You can shoot it better

if you understand it. The action of the trigger of the Lewis gun depends on the combustion of gases inside the barrel, which are formed from the explosion of the cartridge." He would take off one part after another, carefully laying each part aside so that he would have no difficulty in assembling it again.

A short distance away I could hear the raucous voice of the company sergeant major, who had a disreputable looking crowd in front of him whom he was putting through physical exercises. The men had thrown their tunics down on the grass and had rumpled their hair with dirty hands. They had gone through the formal exercises and the fun was about to start.

"Form yourself into a circle," he called. "An' join 'ands. Bill, you tyke yer belt off. Now, Bill will run around the circle an' when he swats one of yer with the belt, run like 'ell an' try to ketch him."

Bill took off his belt and cautiously went round the circle of bent backs until he came to the party he wanted and then he let go with a full arm swing. The other looked surprised and then ran helter-

skelter for him but Bill got into his place before the other touched him. Then the Sergeant started again. Each man was trying to look down his back so that he could see when he was going to be swatted. How they laughed! How much they enjoyed themselves at this manly "Ring around the Rosy."

After a time the Sergeant started a new game. The men were lined opposite each other and clasped hands in seat fashion. The "goat" took off his shoes and was placed, stomach down, on the first row of hands. He was propelled into the air by a dozen muscular arms which, at the same time, threw him forward until he had reached the last of the row of forty men. Forward and backward he went, once, twice, fifty times until there wasn't a breath left in his body and the arms of the men were sore.

Captain Thompson—a handsome young officer, with dark, curly hair and a bewitching smile, brave as a lion, and never "afeard of the devil or Germans," evidenced by the three gold wound stripes on his sleeve—was explaining the details of a mock battle to his men.

"The enemy is over on that ridge," he explained. "You men are coming from the field back there in extended formation, one company supporting the other. Your platoon commander will give the orders as you go forward. Now go over to the field and start toward the enemy when I blow my whistle."

The battle started and Company A came skulking along like a lot of Indians on the war-path, treading gently, bodies bent intently forward, swinging rifles at their sides. At an order from their platoon commanders, they fired at the enemy and crept forward on their hands and knees to new positions and then threw themselves flat on their bellies. Companies B, C and D came over in proper order, creeping forward until they filled the gaps between the advanced men. A grand salvo at the enemy and then quiet. One man got up on his knees.

"Get down, you idiot!" yelled the Captain. "Of all the fools! The enemy are over there. Do you want your dirty head blown off! Now, men, one volley at them and then off you go at them with fixed bayonets."

There were the clicks of a hundred rifles and then one grand, air-splitting yell as the men rushed out in to No-Man's Land and up the brow of the hill until they had obtained their objective.

Colonel Cox was strict on cleanliness and he couldn't stand the sight of a man whose hair was more than two inches long.

"I won't stand for long hair," he told me one day. "In the first place the men don't get a chance to brush it and they get every chance to invite the little bugs to come in and nestle there. I want every man shaved every morning too. I'm a great believer in the saying, 'A clean man fights better.'"

He was most insistent on the men keeping their billets tidy. He would wander about at unexpected hours and "strafe" the men good and plenty, but he was as willing to praise a man as to bawl him out.

I must take off my hat to the cleanliness of the British Army. It is almost an obsession with them. Clean, clean, clean all the time; face, hands, uniforms, belts, shoes, billets—if not for yourself always, at least for the man that comes

after you. The following was posted in orders one day:

TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS

We can never achieve the purse of silk
From the ear of the wallowing sow;
Nor can we all have rich, new milk
From the placid Divisional cow;
But we can, with a little thought and care
In the camps we are passing through,
Do much for the welfare and comfort there
Of ourselves—and of others too.

We can build up walls round the wooden huts
(This work must *always* be done)
To keep out the horrible wind that cuts
And the bombs of the aerial Hun.
We can lay out paths for to keep us dry
As we walk through the mud and snow;
And build brick stoves for to warm us by
When the temperature's rather low.

The walls inside we can make less bare
With pictures for every taste;
The "Hunting Scene" and "The Lady Fair,"
Artistic, refined and chaste.

If we leave them behind when we are moving on
That's the least we can fairly do;
For the other chap's coming when we have gone,
And he may like pictures too.

If we do whatever is in our power
As much as we possibly can;
If we add improvements from hour to hour
On a properly thought out plan;
When the next fellow takes our place he'll say:
"By Jove, they've improved the view,
That's not a bad crush we relieved today,
But we'll show them what WE can do."

I have refrained from saying much about a little animal that has frequently been heard of during this war, chiefly because of a delicate sense of decency. But truth compels me to say that lice, "cooties," "burley jaspers" or anything you want to call them, love the men, particularly near the front line. Even now, I might keep quiet on the subject if it were not for the fact that the louse is probably responsible for trench fever, a disease which is more or less prevalent among the troops. One theory is that he inoculates a person by biting him, the

same as a female mosquito will transfer malaria or yellow fever.

Early in the war, the louse was a general nuisance and it took some time to put him under control.[1] We have discovered that he loves the seams of men's trousers and underclothes and there their eggs are laid. During the day he wanders, and even at night, if the man has his clothes on. We also know that he hates the heat of a hot flat iron and it positively nauseates him to smell creosote or gasolene. He will stand ordinary temperatures fairly well, but if you put him in a Foden sterilizer, he will explode at about 212 degrees. Moreover, frequent changes of clothing and hot baths will make a man's body so clean that he finds it hard to feed upon him.

I was particularly anxious that this battalion should become un-lousey. I determined to have inspections of the men twice a week, see that all of them got a hot "spray" bath and a change of underclothes. Moreover, arrangements were made to have their uniforms ironed while they were bathing and their blankets sterilized.

[1] See Appendix. Extract of a letter of a Canadian medical officer.

I asked the town major for the use of the bathhouse on Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday, so that I would have plenty of time to bathe and inspect each one of the several hundred odd men.

The baths, particularly the shower baths, at the front are very well arranged. The water is pumped up, either by hand or electric motor, into a large cistern which pipes over to the heater in the bathhouse. This heater is a French affair, a coil of pipes with a fire underneath, and the temperature is supposed to be gauged by a centigrade thermometer which, more often than not, is broken so that the Tommy has his water served to him so cold or so hot that he only allows one drop to reach him at a time.

When Saturday came I wandered to the bathhouse to inspect the first twenty men. The change of underclothing and socks hadn't arrived yet, so we had to wait. When the wagon did come, there were only one hundred suits of underwear for two hundred men and a variegated assortment of socks; some grey, some brown, some black, which ranged in size from No. 1a to No. 20b.

I got the first squad undressed and under the showers after I went over each man's skin by the light of a candle. Their uniforms were handed out of a window to pressers who worked over the seams with an iron which should have been hot enough to kill a louse, but which was usually just warm enough to hatch out the eggs.

When the men began to dress I stood round, listening to their remarks. One man had his uniform handed to him. He looked it over carefully and came over to me.

"Captain," he said, "you didn't see any cooties on me, did you?"

"No," I answered.

"Would you mind lookin' at this uniform? I've worn it for a year and haven't had a bite. I knew that there were some eggs along the seams of my trousers but they never hatched out. I looked every day. And now I gives my pants to them pressers; they puts an iron on to them and now see what has happened."

I looked. The trousers were unwearable from a lousy point of view, but as there were no others, he had to put them on.

A husky brute was sitting in one corner in his underwear, holding up a pair of socks.

"Ain't they the cute ones?" he said. "They just fit over my pinky. Guess I'll send 'em 'ome to my kid."

I managed to bathe about a hundred men that afternoon, many of whom showed signs of lousy occupation.

I expected to bathe the rest of the men the next day and was particularly anxious to do so, for I knew we were soon to go into the trenches. But that night an order came in for one hundred men to proceed the next morning to a near-by town, to parade for the presentation of medals and for the rest to form themselves into a fatigue party and dig trenches.

The following day I sent this letter to the A. D. M. S.

"I have tried conscientiously to live up to your orders to eliminate lice from this battalion but have failed to do so for these reasons;

1. There was not enough time for the men to bathe properly.

2. One hundred suits of underwear arrived for six hundred men.

3. Apparently most of the sox that came were meant for the men's children. Some of them might have been old enough for a five-year-old child.

4. All the blankets were sterilized on Saturday although two-thirds of the men were not to get a bath until Sunday.

5. Inspection of all the men, as you suggest, is impossible unless they are allowed to take a bath.

6. The irons are only hot enough to hatch out the eggs in the seats of the men's trousers—not to kill them.

I am as anxious as ever to serve you and await your reply.

I never did get a reply.

CHAPTER XVI

AT three o'clock on Monday afternoon the battalion was on the move, bound for the trenches. We had received orders to remain in support for one night in some dug-outs in a railroad cutting in front of Grand Seracourt and to proceed to the front line on the following night. Therefore our journey was to be a short one—about fifteen kilometres and there was a possibility that we would get there within four or five hours.

The day was bitter cold, and the sharp north wind chilled us to the bone.

First in line came the various companies, each man in full marching order, with his pack, blankets and rifles. Behind the company was a field kitchen which allowed tea or heavier eatables to be cooked on the way. Each unit was separated from the one following by a certain number of yards so that inquisitive aeroplanes couldn't spot them.

Bringing up the tail end of the procession was the regimental M. O., yours truly with his orderly, stretcher-bearers, sanitary squad and water inspectors. The hospital equipment was carried on a Maltese cart, which is a short, two-wheeled wagon, something like a half-limber. This also held my baggage.

The regimental M. O. is provided with a horse, and so I took advantage of the occasion to mount same and ride.

I could tell you a great many thrilling stories about that horse, particularly with me upon him. I had not ridden for nearly twenty years except once a few years ago when at Tobyhanna they put me on an artillery horse who was used to drawing heavy stuff and therefore did not think I counted. I must also except the time I rode Kaiser on that dark, frosty night a few months before when we went back into the line.

The first time I saw Beauty was when I decided to visit my friends of the Ambulance one afternoon. She was a sleek, dark-brown little animal who looked as tame as a dove. In order to make friends, I patted her on her haunch or some place

in that vicinity. Apparently that was one of Beauty's sensitive spots, for she "riz" her hind legs in the air. I despaired of getting on her and assuredly would have sent her back to the stables if so many people hadn't been looking on. Somehow I got seated and off we galloped—at least Beauty galloped while I prayed to the Lord that I wouldn't lose my stirrups.

Everything went well until I was ready to ride home again. My friends in the Ambulance marvelled at my courage in riding her at all, but I just laughed in a care-free sort of way.

Beauty was brought over from the stables and stood in front of my brother officers, frisking about.

"She's a good little animal," I said, "when you get used to her. No trouble at all to get on her."

And then and there I gave a delightful exhibition. Beauty just laughed and kicked up her hind legs every time I tried to put my foot in the stirrup. Finally one of the orderlies held her nose, another held the stirrup and a third boosted me up into the saddle. I shall leave the rest to your imagination. Beauty smelled home and decided that her slowest

gait should be a gallop. I argued otherwise, but she wouldn't listen. Needless to say I came back a wiser but a sorer man.

But to get back to my travels. I didn't stay on Beauty long. She behaved herself wonderfully well because she was on the march and knew her place; but it was so infernally cold that I had to dismount and walk to warm up. After an hour's marching, we stopped on the side of the road for tea. The officers spread a box, the servants got out cups, saucers and spoons, bread, jam and butter. The tea came from the cook-wagons piping hot and was very grateful after our cold march.

At eight o'clock we found ourselves in the railroad cutting—a deep excavation with four unused tracks ankle-deep in clayey mud. Along one side were dug-outs extending for hundreds of yards and, what was particularly delightful, they were electrically lighted—at least for so long as the R. E.'s allowed the juice on. These dug-outs were forty to fifty feet deep and were well ventilated by a number of steep stairways, rudely cut, with only height enough to take a man bent double.

In creeping down them, many of the men got bad knocks and some of them would surely have been severely injured by protruding nails if they hadn't had their tin hats on. One man got a severe cut right above the eye from a jutting rusty nail.

The hospital quarters were very palatial. Above ground was a wooden lean-to against the side of the hill, and this had a good stove in it. Down in the dug-out itself were a number of racks for stretchers, thirty or forty of them, and off to one side a small room was partitioned off which contained a canvas bed, a table and an electric light. I rolled my bedding into it and fitted myself up cozily.

Headquarters was some distance away. Most of the officers were given bunks in deep dug-outs hidden well under the hill and so dark that they had to burn electric lights or candles all the time. Our mess room was above ground, placed between the kitchen and the C. O.'s quarters.

After sick call the next morning I decided to call on the M. O. whom I was to relieve in the line, and to learn all the dope I could from him. So, donning my mackinaw, gas mask and tin hat,

I set out with my orderly. No one moves alone up there—it's too dangerous.

We took a short cut across a muddy field, well cut up with serpentine trenches and matted with barbed wire. We left the field to trudge along a well-paved road which was chiefly notable for having no traffic upon it. It is of the utmost importance that the wily Hun be kept in ignorance of the number of troops at the front, so there is an absolute rule that men must walk only in twos and threes and no wagons or ambulances must be on the road during the daytime.

My first stop was at the A. D. S. which was located in an old disused quarry with brigade headquarters. Here I was cordially greeted by the M. O. in charge, who directed me in to the proper communication trench.

"I'll send one of my men along with you," he said. "These trenches start off all right but don't be surprised if you fall into mud up to your neck—and I wouldn't advise you to walk over the top until you get used to things."

You must remember that we had been through a severe winter and that the ground had frozen.

When the thaw set in, as it had a few weeks before, the walls of the trenches started to cave in, with the result that the mud at the bottom was often over your boot tops.

I followed my guide into the first trench, which for a few hundred yards or so had been cleaned out, parapetted and duck-boarded. I began to think that trenches weren't so bad after all. But we rounded a traverse and then we gurgled and sucked along in the worst mud I had ever seen. I had heard of mud, I thought that I had seen mud, but no one knows what it is until he feels that the thing beneath him is trying to pull his foot one way while he is trying to pull it another. I had been cold at the beginning of my journey; but now, beads of sweat (not perspiration, but sweat) stood out on my forehead and ran down my cheeks. The same sort of stuff trickled down my back until I was soaking wet. My hands were stuck with clay until I couldn't spread my fingers apart. The only thing that saved me from a muddy bath, was my walking stick which I used like a mountain climber does his pole.

We had almost reached the front line and the

R. A. P., when the guide jumped over the top.

"Guess walkin's easier up here. There ain't no danger—anyway it's only a few hundred yards."

I decided it was better to risk German bullets than French mud.

The surroundings weren't very cheerful. As far as the eye could see were miles and miles of trenches which I have no doubt extended from Calais to Verdun and then some. There was a space, a few hundred yards wide that was free from excavation—No-Man's Land. Beyond it were more trenches, looking just the same, but I had reason to think that they weren't very friendly.

The R. A. P. wasn't a very pleasant spot either. The front room was an "elephant"—a heavy, rounded corrugated iron corridor covered with sand-bags. Steps led down from this into the dug-out which was partitioned off into sleeping rooms, some for the officers, some for the men and others for the patients. It was terribly dark, damp and cold down there and the ceilings weeped.

I met the M. O., a cheery, young Irishman, looked over the indents with him, and decided I'd rather sleep above ground in the elephant where

there was light than below ground where there was dampy darkness. He agreed with me that the bunks in the elephant containing two patients might be evacuated and that a little sweeping out would remove all objectionable inhabitants therefrom. The greatest objection to the place was that it was almost impossible to build a fire, for there was no hole anywhere for a flue.

Our battalion came in after dark and took over. As officers' accommodations were limited, I invited three officers to stay in my billet. One of them, Lieutenant Stuart, bunked with me above ground, and the other two stowed themselves in the room down below.

I had expected Padre Gill to share my quarters with me too, but they found a bunk for him at headquarters. The Padre, an R. C. priest, was one of the finest men I ever met. He always had a cheery smile of welcome. He took himself seriously once a week—on Sundays. At other times, he was a real man, affable, kindly, brave. His smooth-shaven face, thoughtful forehead and keen grey eyes overlooked nothing. The black cravat, over-wide celluoid collar and black shoulder

straps were the only things that gave evidence of his calling.

The army chaplain, more commonly called a padre, has done wonders for the British Army and incidentally for himself. Most of them in civil life have lived in small communities where they never had a chance to broaden out. The intellects with which they came in contact were small. But out here they are thrown in with the best of men and they see the best in men. Many of them have already given up their lives for their country and others are awaiting their turn to see their God of whom they have preached so much. It isn't only what the padres are doing for the men now that counts. They have created a wonderful spiritual influence over them which is going to make them take more interest in spiritual matters after the war. A clean example of wholesome living, even in the midst of death, has been set them by these men of the cloth—an example which they will never forget.

Our padre was an Irish philosopher of the old school and a thorough independent. He believed in Irish freedom from the word go. And if more

men from the south of Ireland were like him, I would agree with him.

The M. O. and the Padre are constantly thrown together, and thus I had many an opportunity to chat with them, and recall many of them—amazingly fine men. I can see one padre before me now, succouring the wounded under the heaviest shell fire and often carrying a stretcher; another padre as he talked to the boys of a Sunday; our padre as he carved the roast beef at the headquarters' mess.

In spite of all the hardships and the possible danger, the short time I spent in the trenches will be amongst my pleasantest memories. I was not content to stay within doors all the time, particularly without a fire, for there was much to see and the officers took particular delight in showing me the ropes.

I had no sick—perhaps one or two a day—and very few injured, "casualties," we call them; for there is an unwritten code among the men that no one must report sick while in the trenches. Every man knows that every other man is needed too much. And the only way you would get any sick

at all was to have an officer bring one of his men in by the back of the collar.

As I stated, we were in a "cushy" spot, but that doesn't mean there was nothing doing. During the day it was often mighty quiet, except for a machine-gun bullet or a rifle bullet coming your way when you weren't expecting it and except for the whirr of the aeroplanes followed by a thousand detonations of our Archies as an enemy plane came into view.

Headquarters was about a half mile distant, situated on the leeward side of a quarry. A trench led down to it—also a road. No one thought of taking the trench, for up to that time the Boche hadn't registered the road. But he must have seen my American campaign hat one day when I was walking in a part of it that dips down into a little valley. I let him have his fun and walked serenely on toward B. H. Q. Here this road met the main road. As I turned, I heard a zip across my left cheek and ducked. Never again did I go near that corner.

The Boche apparently thought that road worth while after that, and so they pumped it full of lead

whenever they saw anything on it that looked like a man. Still I was not apprehensive until a few mornings later, when my orderly came in, much the worse for mud, and informed me, "Just as we got to the valley, sir, the Boche lets go with the machine-guns. I says 'Good-bye' to my companions an' falls down on my belly an' crawls to the trench." A few moments later a casualty was brought in—a fellow who was nipped in the heel just as he was getting down on all fours. Feel sorry for him? No. He had got his Blighty and was grinning all over.

As soon as the sun went down and the earth was covered with cold and darkness, Hell was let loose. Our machine-guns beat a tattoo with Johnny's and the big guns let off steam. This music was often interrupted by the tat-tat of a rifle. It wasn't the thundering noise that I had heard in my dug-out months before, but it was the scarey, jumpy kind —quiet, then a shot, some more quiet, then a hundred shots, each separate one scaring you almost to death.

I went on an exploring expedition with my sanitary corporal the second day, to get the lay of the

trenches which wound in and out in a most puzzling fashion. Most of them were marked at intersections with sign posts saying "Broadway," "Piccadilly Circus," and so on, but whether Broadway ended in the Bronx or in Brooklyn, it was hard to tell. One of them might have been marked Philadelphia for it led to the Boche lines—a deadly place.

We wandered in and out of mud, he leading, I following. Often my foot got stuck good and hard, so that I no longer doubted the stories of how the men had to be pulled out with ropes when they first took over this line. Once in a while my foot would slip into a big yawning cavern which proved to be the entrance to a disused front line dug-out, and sometimes I'd get mixed up in the signal wires.

There were many times when I wondered why the Boche didn't pot me. I surely was exposed enough. There was a place where you descended a row of steep steps from a piece of rising ground. For the next hundred yards or so, you couldn't keep covered unless you walked on your hands and knees, and nobody did that.

No-Man's Land is a beautiful place. As you

look over the top, you see a piece of land a few hundred yards wide, sometimes more, sometimes less. It is very straggly and moth-eaten, and has a number of pits made by exploding shells. About twenty yards or so in front of your trench is a barbed-wire barricade, cunningly devised by criss-crossing the prickly wire on stakes so that the enemy can't get through it and neither can you unless you know the weak spots. Then you see a quiet piece of mud, inhumanly quiet and beyond it is more wire and more trenches but these belong to the enemy.

Speaking of wire reminds me of a story an officer told me about the days of '14 that are no more.

"At that time," he said, "we had only a thin line of men and practically no reinforcements. Sometimes we had trenches; at other times the men simply dug themselves in—made a hole in the ground with a spade, just big enough to lie in.

"The Germans opposite us had some deadly snipers and one of these picked off six or seven men each day. The C. O. was furious, so one night he detailed three men to go out to find this sniper.

They never came back. The next day he sent out three more and they never came back. And so it went on for four nights until we had lost twelve men.

"I knew about it, of course, so I went up to the C. O. and asked permission to find this man.

" 'I've lost enough men already,' he said. 'You can't go.' So then I outlined my plan and he gave me *carte blanche.*

"My idea was to locate the sniper by indirect means. So I rigged up a dummy in a Tommy's uniform and in the dead of night I crawled out with it to our wire, where I laid him. I tied a thin rope to his neck, passed it through a pulley on one of the wire poles and brought it back into the trench and waited until morning.

"When it got bright and sunny, I gave my rope a pull and before my dummy got to his knees, he had a hole right through his forehead. A few hours later, I tried it again and he was plugged once more. I didn't want to spoil the game so I waited until almost dusk for the third trial and he got another bullet through him.

"I wanted the sniper's attention on that spot and

I got it. That night I went out with a lot of pieces of iron, tin cans, etc., and tied them on to the wire near the dummy. We often tied such things on so that if a Johnny came through carelessly the wire would jingle. I took the rope off the dummy, put it on the wire and crawled back into the trench again. I gave the rope a pull, the tin cans jingled and my friend, the sniper, thinking we might be coming through, let go with his rifle and I caught the fire of it.

"My next move was to phone to the artillery. I ordered them to put a barrage at a certain place and to move it gradually forward for fifty feet. They did as I requested, and when their noise had ceased, I tried the tin cans again but there was nary a response. I called for three volunteers, and we went out to investigate. We found pieces of the sniper and part of his gun. He had crawled out to a shell-hole beyond his wire each night, a shell-hole which he had deepened until he could stand in it and had it covered over with boards and earth until there was only enough opening for his eyes and rifle."

I made a complete tour of the trenches that first

day and became so well acquainted that I was sure I could find my way in them at any time. I visited B Company headquarters, which consisted of a very deep dug-out in which no light and very little air could enter. Then I wandered over to battalion headquarters where I found a number of letters from home awaiting me. How strange it seemed to read of New York City doings in this barbarous, ungodly land at the front—truly No-Man's Land.

CHAPTER XVII

I LEARNED many interesting things in the front line, the chief one of which was to pretend that you were not afraid. Strange to say, I had no feeling of fear at any time. I don't suppose I was ever in so much danger, and yet every one went about his business so calmly and incidentally so few were hit that there was no use worrying.

In order to hold out in the trenches, mentally and physically, one must forget that he ever had an imagination and must have an iron constitution. If he allows his imagination to work, he will see himself dead or mortally wounded a thousand times a day. It is because the average officer is educated, and therefore thinks more, that I believe him to be a braver man than the soldier under him; for he must exercise his will-power, oftentimes to the limit, to keep his nerves in hand. One of my pals up there was an officer who had been out here

for three years. Any one could see that he was high-strung and as taut as a fiddle; and he confided to me that he was afraid he would break any minute.

I don't attempt to analyse myself. I am conscious of a certain moral stamina and believe that I have the average man's courage and unfortunately more than the average man's imagination. Moreover, I am sensitive and hate to go to a dentist. Yet when I got out here, I made my mind a blank and each time a bullet passed near me, I would stop for a moment and say, "Wouldn't give a d—— if I was hit." There is a great comfort in hearing the bullets zip by you, for you know the axiom, "A bullet you hear won't hurt you." When you don't hear it—well, you know the rest.

There are certain phenomena of trench life that are very interesting. One develops owl's eyes, so that not only does he see very well at night through dilated pupils but the night doesn't seem as dark. One learns to develop an acute sense of hearing too, so that in a short time he is able to tell the difference between a Boche machine-gun and one of his own. The rat-tat-tat of the former is slower

and has a deeper note. This leads to another peculiar observation—the direction from which a rifle is firing. If the gun is pointed away from you, you hear only one crack. If it is pointed toward you, you hear two—one when the cartridge is struck, the second when it leaves the barrel of the gun. A further observation of interest is the rapidity with which the shells from the big guns travel—faster than the waves of sound. One often hears the swish of the shell through the air before he hears the detonation of the gun firing it. Lastly, one learns to tell the difference at night between his own and enemy planes. It is hard to describe this difference in words, but you feel it. The Boche plane has a peculiar, low rumble like in a machine shop, while the English plane sounds more like the b-rr-h of a heavy electric fan.

Not only did no one think of danger but one seldom talked danger up here, except when the men got together to swap experiences, in which the humour of situations was brought out more often than the pathos. Stuart and I would sit on either side of our little table in the elephant waiting for grub, and more often than not he would sing

some Irish ditty in a clear, mellow, tenor voice. One of his songs I remember particularly well. It was called "God Send You Back to Me."

Love, you have left me
Weary and lonely,
Sailing so far away.
Ah, how I miss you,
Daily I'm praying
Safely you'll come home
Some day.

CHORUS.

God send you back to me
Over the mighty sea.
Dearest, I want you near.
God dwells above you,
Knows how I love you,
He will send you back to me.

Though we are parted
Love lives for ever,
When hearts are fond and true.
So, till our meeting—
Let us remember,
Ever I pray for you.

While he was singing this, a lump rose in my throat and I could hardly hold back the tears. I

hadn't been lonesome for a long time—life was too exciting—but now the vision of home came before me. I could see my dear wife and kiddie sitting there, waiting and waiting, and my boy writing me a letter while his mother helped him spell the words. I could hear them both saying, "Oh, when is this awful war going to end? When will Daddy come back to us?" And I murmured, "Dearest, I want you so."

That night Stuart took me on his rounds. Walking in the trenches at night is sure some job. One foot follows the other unconsciously, but neither knows what the other is going to do next. Your arms and hands are more useful, for as you trip or fall you can always grab a piece of dirt and thus keep yourself from falling into the deep mirey mud. You usually start out with a normal body temperature, but before you have finished your tour you are sure that your temperature is round 212 degrees and that a bath in the cold ocean wouldn't be so bad.

One imagines that trenches are clean-cut holes in the ground, running straight and true, perhaps winding over hill or dale and maybe bending at

an angle every mile or so. The truth of the matter is that they are sluice ways filled with mud, with uneven sides and parapets, and run serpentinely in never-ending waves. This serpentine effect is caused by the innumerable traverses. The idea is by making them thus, an explosion in one part of the trench will be unable to have a serious effect on the adjacent parts. Besides the regular trenches —front-line, support and so on—there are communication trenches which lead to headquarters, and a number of "saps"—straight trenches running at right angles to No-Man's Land and often directly communicating with a Boche trench. The only thing that separates you from the enemy here is a mass of barbed wire, thickly enmeshed, which fills up the trench from the bottom.

Stuart and I kept close together—about one traverse apart.

"Never come out here alone, Hays," he whispered. "You see you might take a wrong turn and get lost or injured. No one would know where to find you. And when you are walking with any one, keep one traverse apart so that if a shell comes over, it will get only one of you."

I agreed that I would never go out there alone.

We stopped at the junction of Piccadilly and the Strand to get our bearings, and then walking on we suddenly ran up against a machine-gun post.

"Halt! Who goes there?" called the sentinel in an awful creepy whisper.

We gave the password.

Those "halts" used to make me jump more than anything. You always felt that the guard had his bayonet pointed at you and his finger on the trigger of his gun. Suppose he got nervous?

We spoke to the man for a few moments while we let our eyes wander out into No-Man's Land. It was very quiet—too quiet. We could see out as far as our barbed wire. The men were particularly wide awake at this post, because the Boche had come over a few nights before and walked off with a sergeant and a private. The sky was lit up at irregular intervals by flashing Verilights. The white parapets of the trenches across the way looked ghoulish. When we least expected it, the sharp rat-tat-tat, rat-tat-tat of a machine-gun started

and a dozen bullets passed over our heads. We ducked.

"I've got to go out to a post in one of the saps," he whispered. "Want to come along?"

Did I want to come along? Well, rather. I told him that it was my one ambition in life. So we left the front line trench and carefully picked our way toward the Boche line. We probably didn't walk more than a hundred yards, but I felt as though we were on our way to Berlin. The farther we went, the slower I went. Once I felt myself walking backward.

"Don't see any one here," he whispered, as he stopped for breath. "The men must be round here somewhere. I think we had better get along our wire and see what's doing."

So over the top we went, standing up straight and tall like regular fellows. At last I was out in No-Man's Land—not the No-Man's Land I had read about, with hundreds of dead bodies lying all around and an awful decayey smell, but No-Man's Land just the same.

I wanted to take Stuart's hand and have him lead me. But he kept serenely on until he came to our

wire and then, following its course, he walked towards another sap. Like a little dog I trailed along.

"Halt!" I wished they wouldn't say that word so often.

It was one of our sentries just around the corner. We jumped into the trench.

"See anything tonight?" asked this officer.

"Yes, sir," answered the Lewis machine-gunner. "About a half hour ago we spotted a Johnnie snoopin' around on the other side of that wire. I lets go a few rounds at 'im an' I ain't seen 'im since."

"I'll be back about four A. M." he said and we departed.

The next morning the men brought in a miserable specimen of a Hun, whom they had potted just beyond our wire opposite the machine-gun post I had first visited the night before. He had four or five canteens hung on his belt. Apparently he had lost his way and strayed over towards our trenches.

It's a miserable feeling to get lost up there. A few nights later I started out with my orderly, who

up to that time hadn't been in this particular front line. We had to bring a jar of rum up to B headquarters. At one place I made a wrong turn and in a short time we were hopelessly lost. I don't hesitate to say I was dead scared. After innumerable turns, my orderly leading the way, we came out to a place that was recognizable. Fortunately we had turned inside our own lines instead of out of them.

The following Sunday morning I went over to see Morgan, who was with a battalion in the next quarry about three kilometres away. It was an awful muddy, chalky place, but the dug-outs were much better than ours. He wasn't in, but I left a message for him to come over to tea in the afternoon. I hadn't seen his cheery face for many a moon.

He walked in about four o'clock, happy as ever and looking almost clean. While we sipped our tea from our tin cups and ate bread and marmalade, we swapped experiences. Both of us felt that we were having the time of our lives.

"Aren't you sorry for those poor boobs at the base?" he asked laughingly. "When they sent us

out here, you would have thought we were doomed. I wouldn't go back if I could. This is the life. When I get home I suppose I'll have to preen around like a real hero."

"I feel the same way as you do," I answered. "No one knows what real men are until they come out here. The Tommies have got me heart and soul, and there never was another Jimmie."

"Except my boy," he said.

"Hear what happened this morning?" he asked.

"No."

"Just after you left our place, I guess, a Boche plane came over and dropped a bomb right in the middle of the quarry. Killed three men and injured about half a dozen others. I had my hands full."

"Got out just in time, didn't I?"

The next few days passed rather monotonously. It was damp and foggy, and a chilly wind came up. I wrote letters home and read magazines from the vintage of 1812. One can't carry much literature with him so he has to be content with any old scrap of printed paper. I got hold of a copy of the *Strand Magazine*, August 1908. I read all

the stories and all the advertisements and then read them over again. I almost got started on some stories of my own after I had tired of practising writing with my left hand.

On the last day I decided to take a final tour of the trenches. I felt that, possibly, I would never see them again, so I wanted one long, last, lingering look. At B headquarters I met Stuart and four other officers, who were watching the Boche throw over some 5–9 shells into our wire on the left sector.

"Wonder how the boys are faring over there?" one of the officers said.

He had hardly got the words out of his mouth when we heard an ominous noise, a swish through the air in our direction, and then an awful CRUMP. We were covered with flying dirt and shrapnel. Our tin hats saved us. The shell had landed less than twenty feet away from where we were standing. It was a last farewell—for me.

That night another battalion took over, and we were slated for the railroad cutting again. As my Maltese cart left the aid-post and rattled along the side road, the enemy gave us a parting salvo—

in fact, made things so hot that my men and I stuck close to the safe side of the wagon. That no one was hit was a miracle.

On the following morning I was relieved by the regular M. O. I bid a sad and affectionate farewell to all these dear friends. I put on my tin hat, heavy coat and gas mask, picked up my walking stick and, saying good-bye to my men, walked away.

APPENDIX 1

HUN RED CROSS FIENDS

Our Soldier's Calvary

THOSE who believe that the Germans are a civilized people or that their men and women observe the ordinary decencies of human intercourse would be well advised to study a document which has just been issued by the British Government. It is a Report on the Transport of British Prisoners of War to Germany in August-December, 1914. It contains the first-hand statements and depositions of forty-eight officers and seventy-seven non-commissioned officers and men, most of whom fell, wounded, into the enemy's hands.

That civilized men and women should deliberately insult, torture and abuse wounded or dying captives seems a thing past belief. But the fact is established here indisputably by abundance

of evidence. The infamy was greater because—though this is not stated—it had been deliberately organized and prepared by the German Staff.

It was the German Staff which spread the story that British soldiers carried knives of a peculiar pattern to gouge out the eyes of the German wounded. Precisely the same wicked lie was circulated about the Belgians, and two years later it was cynically withdrawn. It was the German Staff which pretended that the British soldiers used dum-dum bullets, supporting the charge, as Captain H. G. W. Irwin tells us in this report, by showing cartridges which "were in every case of Mauser pattern."

For the British wounded the progress to Germany was a veritable journey to Calvary, and its miseries and agonies were cruelly enhanced by the merciless savagery of the German Red Cross women. Forgetting the symbol which they wore, they behaved as though they had been barbarians. Witness after witness testifies to this. Lieutenant-Colonel Neish says:

> At Cologne I saw a female with a Red Cross badge on her, after serving our escort (of German soldiers)

with coffee, deliberately pour the remaining contents of the can on the ground when requested to allow us to have some. During the journey to Sennelager—some forty-eight hours—we were given one meal (soup).

Major A. S. Peebles states:

At one station we asked two Red Cross ladies for a glass of water, saying it was for a wounded officer; they burst out laughing and said, "Nothing for you English."

Captain Beeman says:

The German Red Cross gave no food to prisoners, wounded or otherwise. At times it is shown to them and then withdrawn, with kindly remarks that it is not for swine.

Captain Hargreaves gives an even more revolting account:

At Liége I tried personally to get the German Red Cross officials to give our wounded men water. They refused. I saw some German Red Cross nurses actually bring water in cans up to our men, show it to them, and then pour it out on the platform. This also happened to me personally. At Aix-la-Chapelle the excitement and anger of the crowd were indescribable. There was an elaborate Red Cross dressing station here. All

water and food were rigorously refused us. The German wounded in the train had their wounds dressed. This was refused us.

Another officer, Major Meiklejohn, deposes:

German Red Cross women refused us any food, calling us insulting names and spat towards us, telling us they would give nothing to the English "Schweinhunde," although we told them some of us were very ill and all were wounded—I myself saw one, and the other officers saw several German women, dressed as nurses and ladies and wearing the Red Cross, deliberately empty bowls of soup on the platform before us, saying something about giving nothing to "English swine."

Other officers, among whom I understand was Captain Pelham-Burn, Gordon Highlanders, saw Red Cross women spit in the soup before offering it to them.

Throughout this journey the conduct of the German women, especially those dressed as Red Cross nurses, was revolting and barbarous beyond words, and as a result of the continuous brutality of Red Cross women and officials many prisoners of war besides myself have still a repugnance to seeing a Red Cross armlet.

In another case an officer tells how a Red Cross woman brought him a glass of water and spat in it before handing it to him.

In this continuous record of cruelty to helpless and suffering men there is only one case given where Red Cross women showed any human sympathy. This was at Coblenz, where in the words of Captain H. G. Gilliland, "the sliding doors of the truck (in which a number of wounded had travelled for two days without water or food) were pulled open and two or three German women of the Red Cross came up and asked when we had food last. When they found that we had had none, they went off and got us some sausage sandwiches, but before they could give them to us they were prevented by German officers who said: "These are English prisoners and they are to have nothing."

The German soldiers were cruel enough, though here and there some of the escorts showed some sense of pity for the wretched victims in their charge. The ambulance trains which, under the Geneva Conventions ought to have been used impartially for all wounded, were never employed for the British. Our men were thrown into loathsome cattle trucks. Thus Major Vandaleur, with fifty-one other wounded and prisoners, was forced into a

closed wagon from which horses had just been removed.

So tight were we packed (he states) that there was only room for some of us to sit down on the floor. This floor was covered fully three inches deep in fresh manure, and the stench of horse urine was almost asphyxiating. We were boxed up in this foul wagon with practically no ventilation for thirty hours, with no food and no possibility of attending to purposes of nature. All along the line we were cursed, officers and soldiers alike, at the various stations, and at Mons I was pulled out in front of the wagon by the officer in charge of the station, and after cursing me in filthy language for some ten minutes, he ordered one of his soldiers to kick me back into the wagon, which he did, sending me sprawling into the filthy mess at the bottom of the wagon.

One of the prisoners thus tortured still suffers in his eyes from the ammonia fumes generated by the urine in one of these pestilential wagons.

In another case a train of British prisoners was deliberately left by the Germans under heavy fire, "presumably due to a sortie from Antwerp." "The Germans" (says the officer who experienced this treatment) "retired across the line and left

our train between the two contending parties. We were then moved slowly up and down in front of the Germans for about an hour; I suppose to draw fire (which we did)—I consider this use of a hospital train as against the Geneva Convention."

Sometimes when food was given, it was given in the most loathsome manner. Thus one small jug of soup was allowed to a whole carriage of wounded and this "soup was useless as it was put into a jug used for urinating." Wherever the British were taken they were spat at or upon by German men, women and children. Bavarian troops distinguished themselves by this loathsome form of outrage. They seemed, says Captain Irwin "to specialize in expectoration."

The German school children howled "hate choruses." Sometimes the wounded were threatened with knives and revolvers. German officers were prominent as bullies and as cads, showing not one spark of chivalry, but a mean and cruel revengefulness, and in at least one case allowed troops to strike a convoy of wounded with sabres and bayonets and to kick the crutches from under the arms of the cripples.

Reports of crimes so atrocious and so inhuman should lead the Allies and the people of Great Britain to reflect on what peace with Prussianism would mean. We cannot live on peaceable terms with savages who behave thus. President Wilson never spoke more truly than when he said, now nearly a year ago, "The wrongs against which we now array ourselves are not common wrongs; they cut to the very root of human life." (*Continental Daily Mail*, February 26, 1918.)

HUN TORTURE OF PRISONERS

A Soldier's Narrative

GERMANS, coming along the trench in which I was taken prisoner, shot our wounded. They took deliberate aim and fired on anybody lying down.

As the men got into the train for Schneidemuhl Camp (in Posen) the Germans hauled back any who had overcoats and took them from them. It was freezing hard, and we had to make the journey with only our shirts, trousers and boots.

At Schneidemuhl, where there was an epidemic of typhus, the British prisoners were sent in batches of about fifty down to a receiving room, where they lay about on the floor among the Russians like rotten sheep. Men died there while waiting for the doctor. One man was lying down when a Russian fell over him dead. About twenty or thirty British prisoners died of typhus and seven thousand Russians were counted as having died of it.

We were taken to one barracks and stripped and had our hair shaved off, and then were given a blanket each and marched, otherwise naked, through water about a foot deep to another barracks. If men got up through being delirious, wishing to go to the latrines or attempting to leave the hut, they were knocked down by the orderlies with knotted towels. When I went out I had to put on the clothes of a Russian who was being admitted to the hospital suffering from typhus.

The general treatment of prisoners at Schneidemuhl Camp for the first six months that I was there was terrible. The Germans were constantly shooting somebody or putting the bayonet into them.

I was present at a flogging in one of the dugouts. A barrel was brought in by command of the Captain, and the man was laid over it with his shirt off. Four or five Germans got hold of thick sticks and the officers told the men to thrash him. They hit him over the head and over the back and knocked him unconscious. I should think that they gave him thirty or forty strokes each. He was then taken up and tied to the wires for two hours. All

the Englishmen were formed up under a strong guard and a battery of guns was turned on us to witness it.

After a prisoner had been shot in the camp his body was put in a coffin without a lid and was taken round the camp for exhibition.

Prisoners from the reprisal gangs returned to us in a very bad state. One had been injured when working down in a coal mine. He was descending a ladder about forty-three yards long into the mine, when a German civilian working there came down after him. The prisoner was a little man and could only go down one rung at a time. He said that the German followed him down after he had gone down three or four rungs and purposely trod on his head and hands, with the result that he fell to the bottom of the shaft unconscious and he almost broke his back. He is suffering from a curvature of the spine in consequence of the fall but is still working in a *lager* at Friedrichsfeld.

Reprisal prisoners complained that no parcels reached them. Until recently the parcels of the other prisoners were opened and the contents put into one basin. Tooth powder, dubbin, cotton,

tooth tablets, pepper and cigarettes were removed from the parcels and confiscated. English newspapers were not allowed. *(Continental Daily Times.* April 19, 1918.)

THE MOST THOUGHT-OF TOWN IN THE WORLD

THIS town today is the most thought-of town in the world. It is on the lips and in the thoughts of millions of people, for every one knows that it is there, for a great preliminary, the German club blow is aimed—or, as the French stylist would term it in the language of Balzac, the German *coupe de massue.*

Just before the battle started the town might have been likened to Brussels the night before Waterloo, for it is a gay place, full of animation and burning life—though, unlike Brussels in those days, it does not go in for dances in war time. The Germans reached it in 1914. They stayed there a little more than a week, and the Hotel du Rhin had to take the paper money of their officers. But they departed hastily.

It was almost their utmost throw West, and soon afterward they were in flight at the battle of the

Marne. When, after the Aisne, our expeditionary force swung north, it was included in the British zone, but with this peculiarity—it was left, and remains to this day, under French sentinelship.

The *entente* between France and Great Britain is perfectly symbolized here; entering or leaving you must slow up at the challenge. You must salute the French grey as well as the British khaki. Since the German retreat in 1917 from the Somme, it has been largely immune from the visits of enemy aeroplanes at night—though not wholly, for they hovered over early last December, but not for destructive purposes.

Before the enemy retreated, however, he bombed this town for a while almost nightly. He scattered his "eggs" at random, but not a one struck the cathedral. The cathedral, as every reader of Ruskin knows, is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things made of stone. It is badly placed; it is hemmed about by a mass of poor architecture, but the thing itself is matchless. Rich decorations in perfect taste, ethereal heights and dreaming spires!

The enemy has not yet swung his huge club upon it, but we know his passion for registering his

heavies on a Norman tower or spire. It is in grave peril today. It has kept its sprightly French civilian life all through the war, as has perhaps no other town in the British zone. It has—besides a famous hotel—the most famous restaurant in a northern French town today. Tens of thousands of British officers have welcomed the chance of an hour or two there, snatched from the horrors and monotony of trench life and meals. It was always gloriously worth while to motor the best part of fifty miles from and back to the mire and shells of the Somme to sample the menu and to see a white tablecloth once more.

This town has done a roaring trade for several years past—in fact, since it was rid of the German incubus. It deals in comestibles chiefly, but the photographs of the new model army in khaki, the picture postcards, the endless souvenirs from somewhere in France—what British, Canadian, Australasian town or country district has not had its share of these?

A glance at the map by the veriest amateur in war reveals instantly the importance of the place. The Somme, here usefully navigable, feeds it as

well as do four railway lines. Observe too the position in relation to it of Abbeville. Indeed, the value of the town strategically is basic. The ten or eleven miles of country which now part the enemy from it gradually drop from steep switch-back into plain. *(Continental Mail,* March 14, 1918).

Extract from a letter written to his sister by a Canadian medical officer, who was in England when the war broke out, and joined the Imperial Forces:

I wonder if I told you that practically every man, both N. C. O.'s and an occasional officer, are lousey, and it is almost impossible to get rid of them. You may use blue ointment. Well, I was lucky enough to get a pound, but you will understand how far short that would come of the requirements with a town in Canada of a thousand population, all sleeping packed close together, with a blanket each and a great coat to cover with. Their underwear, although changed twice a month, is soon infected from the tunic, great coat and blankets, so that any vermicide would have to be issued in about a hundred gallon lots twice a month for it to be applied. The tunics are all lousey as well as the underwear, but these with the trousers and great coats are only exchanged when worn out, so you see that each

soldier carries his leaven of vermin, to infect his fresh clothes, or any one that has by some individual method got clean. I have told you of getting infected myself, and it is no easy matter to get clean. You change underwear and get a bath but find yourself infected next day. You change again but find you are still infected, and have now to chase around to get your clothes washed to put on. I have money and clothes to work with, while the Tommies in the majority of cases have only one change and no money. Often he has thrown away his change to lighten his pack, so he is always lousey.

It has become a forgotten nuisance to both the men and the Army, but of late some are working to get a system instituted that will clean them and keep them clean. I have done a lot of kicking and created a nuisance of myself in doing so, but it is beginning to take effect with the kicks of others as well. I think in 1919, or possibly the winter of 1918, we will have a system like the Boche, and our men will be clean or will be sent away and cleaned.

Some cases of infection are beyond description, and one of the peculiarities is that after a time being infected by vermin they become careless of it, and the clean ones lose hope of staying clean and also become careless.

If I see this one change I will feel that I have done a lot for the Army. For our own regiment we try by any means possible to get them frequent baths, about

once a week, and if possible get where there is a sterilizer, so that when they are bathing they have their clothes sterilized, and then they get a clean start till some dirty fellow comes along and infects them again. Yesterday I got seventy-two done and will get more tomorrow.

You ask, "Why not do them all?" Well, that would be done if we could get the sterilizer, but there is only one in a division of 20,000 men, and it is always busy on contract work, i. e., work arranged for weeks ahead so that we can't get it when we are near it, and even if we do get it we only get two hours when we need a whole day. So you see the whole remedy lies in the supply of more sterilizers, but there are many, many people that have to be interested in one way or another before the supply will come.

Letters of recommendation when the author applied for a commission as Major while with the British Forces. (Without his knowledge, the commission had already gone through American channels).

O. C. No. 1 Presbyterian (U. S. A.) General Hospital,
Etretat.

The attached application for Capt. H. Hays, M. O. R. C., U. S. A., is forwarded to you for necessary action

please, as this officer is under orders to report to you forthwith.

While he has been in this Division, Captain Hays has proved himself to be a most valuable military Medical Officer.

H. S. Roch, Colonel,
A. D. M. S., 36 Div.

24. 2. 18.

A. D. M. S. 36th Division.

Memo.

Application for promotion from Capt. Harold M. Hays, M. O. R. C. forwarded. I consider that this officer is in every way qualified for the rank he is applying for. While serving under me he has shown exceptional ability and keenness. He understands what is meant by discipline and has a knowledge of regulations.

D. deC. O'Grady, Lieut.-Col.
110 Field Ambulance.

24. 2. 18.

To Surgeon General A. E. F.

Capt. H. M. Hays was attached to this Battalion for a short period as M. O. During this time he performed his duties in a most conscientious manner showing great keenness in his work. He was always most anxious to give me any assistance in his power—such as holding his medical inspection at inconvenient

hours, etc., and in every way I found him to be a most excellent officer.

R. R. Rose, Major,
Commanding 2nd Royal Irish Rifles.

21. 2. 18.

108th Brigade.
23. 2. 18.

Dear Hays,

I wish to thank you for all the good work you did for me while I was commanding the Battalion. I enjoyed your keenness immensely and I hope you discovered much knowledge from your tour in the trenches. We must meet again sometime and I hope soon.

Yours sincerely,
Patrick A. Cox, Colonel,
Commanding 108th Brigade.

To Surgeon General A. E. F.

Capt. H. M. Hays, M. O. R. C., was on the strength of the 110th Field Ambulance during the period in which I was in command. I formed a very high opinion of his executive and administrative abilities and he had a very good command of men.

A. W. S. Christie, Capt. R. A. M. C.
110 Field Ambulance.

24. 2. 18.

The last letter written to the author by Lieutenant Morgan.

March 19, 1918.

Dear Major Hays,—

Ah—your Majority has arrived at last. I was mighty glad to hear of it, for certainly you should have had it long ago. Dave told me in a recent letter that you had withdrawn from the 2-bar class. Knowing that you were spending leave in Cannes, the enclosed clipping from the *Mail* caught my eye, and I was interested to see your name, together with those of Stevens and Cassamajor. I'm sure you're having one wonderful bit of sport down there, and I must admit I'd much like to be in the crowd. Dave and Art and I expected to put in a week or so of leave there. Cannes is a regular Monte Carlo, they say.

As it happens, I am still with the worthy 9th, in reserve right now at Grand Seracourt. Our tours in the line have been simple enough lately and casualities rare. It has been good sport, however, for the weather recently has been absolutely perfect, giving wonderful observation. I've seen plenty of Boche and have missed his machine-gun bullets successfully. One night the C. O. and I went all around the line about twelve o'clock, going out into the saps and wandering about in No-man's Land. Incidentally a machine-gun turned near us and d—— near cut the grass between our legs. The Boche is quiet these days, however, and he hardly replies at all to the rather heavy strafing he gets night and day. One thing certain now is our guns are not

afraid to speak. The best sight I have seen recently was watching the tremendous shell of a 12-inch howitzer flying off into space. It is very remarkable how one can see the shell for fully a minute or two from the moment it leaves the muzzle until it goes out of view.

I hope I may see you before long as I have applied for leave, going to England by way of Havre, stopping a day in Etretat if I can arrange it O. K. I'd much like to see these poor unlucky devils who had to stay around the Base while we were having the only real sport in the war—at the front. You and I certainly had it on the rest of the crowd. I applied for leave yesterday, and if it goes through all right I expect to be in Etretat in a couple of days. I surely hope so. My very best to you.

Yours,
SYD. MORGAN.

Letter from Padre Gill written to the author on April 4, 1918.

2nd Irish Rifles.

My Dear Doctor,

Many thanks for your letter. I am sorry to say we have had a bad knock. We were in it, as you may

[1] This was written two days before the spring offensive on March 21st, 1918.

suppose. Dobbin, Lynch and McFarren got killed on the first day. Keating was wounded the third day and about the same day the Battalion was completely cut off, holding Cugny "at all costs." Thompson, Moore and Marriott Watson were with them—so that we are in doubt as to their fate. Major Rose was badly wounded the first day but he is pulling through all right. Beyond a mouthful of gas and a rather narrow shave of being with the Battalion when they were surrounded, I got through the ten days' retirement all right; but it was very fatiguing and even now I feel pretty tired. The whole thing was very sad. The Battalion did splendidly and fought to the end. Gibson, your predecessor, and a section of a field ambulance were taken prisoners. We are again up to strength as far as members go, but of course it is all different. I expect we shall soon have some of your men near us. Thank you again for your kind note. The old 2nd, I am glad to say, has many friends. We often speak of you, and I hope we shall come across each other again. May God bless you and yours.

Yours very sincerely,
H. V. GILL, Catholic Chaplain
att. 2nd Irish Rifles, France.

THE END